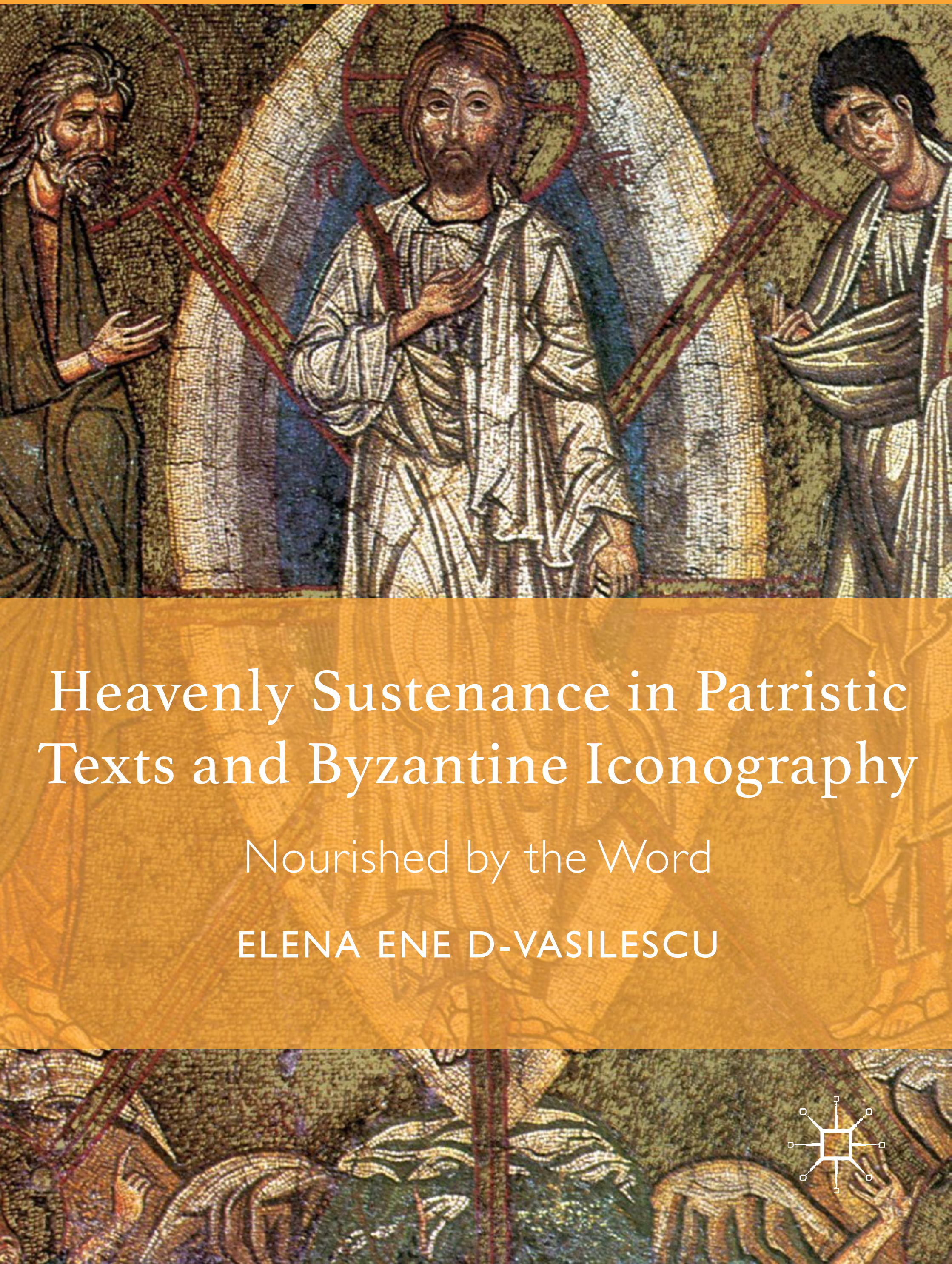
NEW APPROACHES TO BYZANTINE HISTORY AND CULTURE



Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography

Nourished by the Word

ELENA ENE D-VASILESCU

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New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture
ISBN 978-3-319-98985-3 ISBN 978-3-319-98986-0 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018952929

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface and Acknowledgements

The ideas within this book are mainly supported by Byzantine, Patristic, and connected religious texts that refer to the spiritual needs of the human soul and to the saints. The first thought about writing it came when I discovered a particular fresco during my research that concerned the cult of St. Anne along the *Via Egnatia*. The image it depicts survived from 1361 in the Church of St. Mary Zahumska, on Ohrid Lake, Macedonia. It represents St. Anne breastfeeding the infant Mary.[1] My study about this piece has established that a local lord, Grgur Brankovic, ordered the shrine to be built and this holy person to be frescoed within—Grgur and his wife were praying for a child, and through their generous act they were hoping for the saint's intercession towards such an end (given the fact that Anne gave birth late in life, she is considered instrumental in mediating supplications with respect to maternity). Such a patronal gesture would have been in line with a long Byzantine tradition. For me personally it was important to determine the Biblical and Patristic sources that allowed such a rendering to be included among the traditional ecclesiastical images.

While doing research for the British Academy and History Faculty in Oxford, I came across seven more churches that have on their walls depictions of Anna breastfeeding. Despite the fact that none of them is dedicated to the saint, they contain the scene *Anna Galaktotrophousa*. All are located along the *Via Egnatia* or within easy access from it (this does

[1] Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, "A Case of Power and Subversion? The fresco of St. Anna nursing the child Mary from the Monastery of Zaum, Ohrid", *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. 70, 2012, nos. 1–2, pp. 241–272.

not mean that those are the only ones in the world containing this depiction—even though I doubt that there are many—but just that those which I found are concentrated in this area). This cannot be a coincidence. Obviously, barren women wishing children existed in other places of which culture was influenced by Byzantium. Especially the conspicuous absence of this iconographic motif in the vast territory of Russia is significant from this point of view; I have tried to find it depicted in the culture of that land with no positive results. Therefore, it does not seem that all these churches have been founded out of yearnings for an offspring. What is more intriguing is the fact that the representation of this iconographic scene began simultaneously (in the twelfth century) at both ends of the above-mentioned Southern European route. This also makes it impossible for the visual representations of *Anna lactans* to be the product of the same iconographic school, especially because the period between one illustration and the other is lengthier than 50 years. Even when the interval between two renderings is shorter, the places in which they occur are too far from one another to allow us reasonably affirm that they were accomplished by the same hand or conceived by the same mind. That observation and the existence of similar instances in history made me think that depictions of Anne breastfeeding scenes are reactions opposed to a particular strand in the theology of the time. As is known and will be further developed in the book, the appearance and rapid proliferation of icons as, for example, "The Embrace of the Apostles Peter and Paul", was one of the expressions of the hopes espoused by the organisers (some of them patrons of religious establishments) of Council of Ferrara-Florence concerning a reunion of Orthodox and Catholic churches.[2] Also Nicole Thierry provides an example through the decorative programme in the Church of Sts. Joachim and Anne, *Kizıl Çukur*, Cappadocia. She considers that it was created as "an attempt to comply with various understandings about the nature of Christ"[3] specific to the sixth–seventh centuries, particularly to those taking place during the

[2] Giuseppe Alberigo (ed.), *Christian unity: the Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438/9–1989*, Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991.

[3] Nicole Thierry, "La Cappadoce de l'antiquité au moyen âge", *Melanges de l'Ecole francaise de Rome. Moyen Age*, vol. 110, no. 2 (1998), p. 888 [pp. 867–897]; republished in Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive 4, Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.

reign of Emperor Heraclius (610–641), who supported monenergism[4] to the detriment of monothelism.[5]

In a similar vein, the peculiarity of St. Anne breastfeeding image to the Southern European areas and to the period twelfth–fourteenth centuries makes it plausible that this was a response to the Bogomil Docetism, which devalued the importance of the matter and especially of the human body. Similarly, as Saska Bogevska-Capuano indicates, a representation as that of Trinity in Omorphokklesia Church near Kastoria (thirteenth century) as a *tricefalous* man could be interpreted as a counterreaction to the Manicheism of the Bogomils, even though she personally considered it rather a mark of Western influence in Byzantine iconography (unfortunately she does not say where in the West one can find a counterpart to it). An image like this suggests extra-corporality; I do not think however that the patron and/or the iconographer necessary conceived it having in mind for this figure to be an indicator from this perspective. Of course, the depictions of *Maria lactans* that circulated in the same period were also a factor in the portrayal of Anne suckling—they can even be considered a subtype of that representation—but the fact that the episode of the saint breastfeeding ceased being painted after the last remains of the Bogomils were eradicated, while that referring to Mary was still represented in the nineteenth century, as I have pointed in some detail somewhere else,[6] supports my theory.

During my visit to Ohrid and Macedonia in general, and also to Serbia, I noticed how powerful the cult of this holy figure still is in that part of Europe. I already knew how much Sts. Nicholas, George, Dimitrios, and Catherine of Alexandria are revered in the south of the continent from my work on Byzantium and its heritage. During visits in northern countries, I discovered churches dedicated to the same saints. To shortly exemplify, Munich has two dedicated to St. Anne: one monastic and one parochial, both in an area called in its entirety the suburb of St. Anne's/St. Anna-Vorstadt. Also Eindhoven in the Netherlands has a church dedicated to St. George (Sint-Joris Kerk, Eindhoven-Stratum) and one to Saint Catherine of Alexandria (Catharina Kerk). Some of these places of worship hold well-attended evensongs in which they exclusively perform and listen to

[4] Monenergism was the movement maintaining that in Christ there are two natures but a single energy.

[5] Monothelism asserted that in Christ there are two natures but one will.

[6] "A Case of Power and Subversion? The fresco of St. Anna nursing the child Mary from the Monastery of Zaum, Ohrid", *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. 70, 2012, nos. 1–2, p. 267.

Byzantine music—their clergy publicise these religious services as being "Byzantine".

My curiosity was incited to find out how the cult of the native southern saints has arrived in the North and survived so well in spite of its distance from the territories of the empire where it originates. Also the discovery of iconography representing breastfeeding compelled me to find out what determined the Byzantine artists to start rendering such scenes concomitantly at the extremities of the Egnatian Way. And I began researching both these topics; they are logically connected since the circulation of the cult of a saint entailed the proliferation of iconographic scenes and motifs related to him or her.

The results of this effort lead to the conclusion that at least in the case of saints' veneration—and in many others, notably in trade—the divide East-West with which historiography operates should be replaced by a South-North one. There is no need for me to explicitly point out in the book each case which illustrates this necessity; it will be evident throughout. I had discussed the idea with colleagues and students when I came across an article rich in substance, as all his writings are, published by Peter Brown in 1976, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways", in *The Orthodox Churches and the West* journal.[7] I was glad to discover in that material the same idea and to find out that it derives from Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*[8]—a fact acknowledged by the Princeton scholar. Then I obtained a grant from the British Academy to follow my deductions through library and field work and thus the book came into being. Therefore, my thanks go to this institution for sponsoring the project whose results I include in the volume and to the colleagues at the Faculties of History and Theology, University of Oxford, especially those from the Byzantine, Patristics, Late Antiquity, as well as Classical and Mediaeval Studies, who shared their expertise and friendship with me and offered me opportunities to present extracts from the book to students and colleagues. Among them, I am especially grateful to Mark Edwards, Averil Cameron, Jonathan Shepard, Jane Humphries, Alexander Lingas, Mary

[7] Peter Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways", in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, Oxford: Blackwell, vol. 13 (ed. Derek Baker) 1976.

[8] Edward Gibbon, "Introduction. Notes to the second edition", *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1, 1776; London: Strahan & Cadell, second edition, 1814, vol. 1.

Cunningham, Sebastian Brock (a good friend, who, with his wife Helen, has always been kind and encouraging towards me and my work), Cyril and Marlia Mango, Ralph Cleminson, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Alina Bîrzache, Mallica Kumbera Landrus, Paul Fiddes, Elizabeth Theokritoff, Bryan Ward-Perkins, the Right Rev. Dr Kallistos Ware, Yoanna Tsvetanova Planchette, John Watts, and Chris Wickham. I thank also the colleagues at San Marco's Procuratoria, especially those from the Technical Office for allowing me to take all the photos from Venice included here. David Smith, the librarian of Saint Anne's College in Oxford; Gilia Slocock, the editor of *Saint Anne in History and Art* (1999) published by the same institution; and their colleagues who put at my disposal all the material they hold in connection to its patron saint. Also the librarians in the Old Bodleian, History, Theology, Sackler, Wolfson College, and Christ Church in Oxford were very solicitous to my efforts in bringing this work to fruition. Peter, my husband, patiently endured my busy schedule and I am grateful to him for this. Other friends and colleagues were involved professionally and morally, sustaining me through discussions, indications regarding bibliography, and in various other ways. I truly regret that I cannot mention all of them here. Of course, all shortcomings of the book are my own responsibility.

Contents

Abbreviations

AASS	*Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur* [Acts of the saints worshiped throughout the world], Antwerp and Brussels, 1643–1940; original ed., 67 vols.—J. Bolland et al. (eds.)
ABull	The Art Bulletin
AnBoll	Analecta Bollandiana
Apocrypha	*Apocrypha. Revue internationale des litteratures Apocryphes*
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellenique
BHG	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica*—S. J., (ed.), vols. 1–3, third edition, Brussels, 1957
Bibliotheca veterum Patrum	Bibliotheca veterum Patrum antiquorumque scriptorium ecclesiasticorum graecorum, postrema Lugdunensi longe locupletior atque accuratior—Andreas Gallandi (ed.), 1765–1788—J. B. Albritii Hieron, Venice, vols. 1–14
BMMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
BNJ	Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbuche
Byz	Byzantion. Revue internationale des etudes Byzantines
ByzSlav	Byzantinoslavica
ByzZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CFBS	Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae
CMP	Corpus Marianum patristicum—Sergius Alvarez Campos (ed.), Burgos, 1970–1985, vols. 1–8

CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum: qua optimae quaeque scriptorum patrum Graecorum recensiones a primaevis saeculis usque ad octavum commode recluduntur—M. Geerard, F. Glorie; F. Winkelmann, and J. Desmet (eds.), Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–1987, vols. 1–6
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte
HER	English Historical Review, 1886–present
JMEMS	*Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
JWI	*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	The Septuagint
MARIANUM	*Marianum Journal*
MonPiot	Monuments et Mémoires de la Fondation Eugene Piot
MS	Mediaeval Studies
NCE	*New Catholic Encyclopedia*
NPNF	Selected Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; H. Wace and P. Schaff (eds.)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NRSV 1995	*The New Interpreter's Bible: general articles & introduction, commentary & reflections for each book of the Bible, including the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical books in twelve volumes.* v. 9 [The Gospel of Luke, The Gospel of John], Nashville
NT	Novum Testamentum
Numen	*Numen: International Review for the History of Religions*
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
ODB	*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* A. P. Kazhdan, A. M. Talbot et Alii (eds.), I–III, New York/Oxford, 1991
ODCC	*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*
PG	Patrologia cursus completus, Series Graeca
PL	Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
SCH	Studies in church history
Speculum	*Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The book is mainly concerned with Patristic ideas about the spiritual needs of the human soul and indicates how Byzantine, apocryphal, and other religious literature and iconography referring to saints have expressed their preoccupations with the issue. It introduces a case study that suggests that following the emergence of the Bogomils in the Balkans and later of the Cathars in Europe,[1] both being movements that emphasised the spiritual to the detriment of the material and denied a fully human nature to the historical Jesus, mainstream Christianity countered their views and cultivated a dramatic focus on the body as the epitome of human-divine interaction. As a response to and a reflection of these happenings, another phenomenon took place: the iconography along the *Via Egnatia* during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries witnessed the occurrence of a new subtype within the established typology of *Eleousa/Eleusa*—the depiction of holy women breastfeeding their offspring. The novelty of the current study consists in the fact that it connects developments in visual representations and the praxis of the Byzantine Church with the occurrence of the Bogomils.

[1] Daniel F. Callahan, "Ademar of Chabannes and the Bogomils" and Bernard Hamilton "Bogomil Influences on Western Heresy", in Michael Frassetto (ed.), *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, Brill Leiden, 2006; M. Frassetto, *Heretic Lives: Medieval Heresy from Bogomil and the Cathars to Wyclif and Hus*, London: Profile, 2007; Averil Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology", in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 3, 2003, pp. 471–492.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_1

The work is also a commentary on the Scriptural, Patristic, medieval, apocryphal, and iconographic sources that concern nourishment, which is understood to be at the same time biological and spiritual. It also refers to historical persons and to documented events which took place within and on the fringes of the "more or less fixed entity"[2] that was the Byzantine Empire. It attempts to situate saints, facts, images, legends, and metaphors in their socio-cultural context.

The volume also suggests a methodological approach that could aid researchers to analyse historical, theological, cultural, and other developments in Europe in a more nuanced manner: in addition to the currently prevalent East-West distinction taken into consideration in such enterprises, researchers should also bear in mind a North-South division that, as we shall demonstrate, is apposite in many situations. This is not, in itself, an entirely new thought either for historiography or, as shown in the Preface, for me personally. As remarked, the idea is present in both Gibbon and Brown's above-mentioned works. Here are Gibbon's arguments to support it: "The distinction of North and South is real and intelligible … But the difference between East and West is arbitrary and shifts round the globe."[3] As we shall see, in the matter of European hagiography, following the North-South division is the most appropriate strategy. Since this volume is concerned with St. Anne in three chapters, the distinction is relevant to the topics undertaken. For Brown himself it suggests that "the history of the Christian church in late antiquity and in the early middle ages is far more a part of the history of the Mediterranean and its neighbours than it is a part of the history of the division of the Mediterranean itself between east and west". He acknowledged his indebtedness for this notion to other scholars, thus: "I would like therefore to hark back to the perspective of Henri Pirenne, in his *Mahomet et Charlemagne*. Whatever the weakness of Pirenne's thesis […], his [Gibbon's] intuition on the basic homogeneity of Mediterranean civilisation deep into the early middle ages still holds good."[4]An article from 1976 may look obsolete, but I do not think that this one is; all of Brown's intuitions have proved correct in both the short and long term. Averil Cameron also supports the idea of

[2] Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, p. 16.

[3] Edward Gibbon, "Introduction. Notes to the second edition", *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. I, 1776; London: Strahan & Cadell, second edition 1814, vol. 1, p. xxxvi.

[4] Peter Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity", pp. 2–3.

homogeneity around the Mediterranean when speaking about the occurrence of saints and holy men; for her, their cult appeared simultaneously in places around this sea.[5] Moreover, one can even today clearly notice uniformity among the countries in that geographical area from the perspective of how they display their religion and, more generally, their culture. The shared Byzantine heritage and the communication network, together with the trade and cultural exchanges these facilitate, are among the factors that have contributed to this state of affairs.

A methodological aspect worth alluding to, even though it will not be developed further in this book, is the periodisation of history. I suggest that perhaps we should not be overly meticulous about it because the time ascribed to each historical "stage" varies almost from country to country—this is certainly the case with respect to what goes by the name of "the European Middle Ages". My research and teaching in three countries, two in Europe and one on the North-American continent, have taught me that the best way to deal with this issue is simply to state in our publications which specific century (or even year?) we are referring to. Thus, the readers will be able to classify events according to the convention regarding historical and temporal divisions that have already been accepted in their own countries and institutions, while still interacting easily with the international scholarly community.

Focusing now on the main topic of the book, nourishment and milk-feeding, we shall say that the case of *Anna lactans* (*Galaktotrophousa/Mlekopitatelnitsa*[6]) can be illustrated through a direct and empirical method of evaluating the textual, pictorial, and other sources that, while discussing milk, also touch on the wider theme of the relation between spiritual and biological. As noticed above, intriguingly, the churches that contain depictions of St. Anne feeding her child are located solely along the Egnatian Way and had their decorative programme made within a documented period of 200 years (or at most 300 years if some suppositions are to be taken into consideration[7]); various and intense interchanges took place along this historical route in the temporal interval the publication covers.

[5] Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity; AD 395–600*, New York, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 71.

[6] The Greek, respectively Slavonic terms for "Anne nursing/breastfeeding".

[7] In the case of San Marco in Venice, the sculpture representing St. Anne—and perhaps a mosaic too—might be dated to the eleventh century; in the absence of written documents, we will present the circumstantial evidence that supports this hypothesis.

As said, I connect the apparition of this phenomenon with the occurrence of the Bogomils, or more precisely *with the period of maximum expansion* of the Bogomils in the Balkans at the end of the eleventh century and throughout the twelfth; it took a while for the ideas to spread and for a counter-reaction to develop, but certainly when the last remains of the Bogomils waned, the visual rendering of Anne suckling her infant daughter ceased (the last—at least surviving—image is that from Ohrid, 1361).[8] Because of their anti-materialistic stance, as will be shown in Chap. 8, the Bogomils did not believe in the sacraments of the Church and disregarded pictorial accounts of the holy. It is very probable that the first iconographers to carry out a representation of breastfeeding (or their patrons) felt the need to counter such a theology by allowing for an emphasis on the human body as well as for more illustrations of the temporal world in their works. For them, a holy woman nursing was the quintessence of the idea of the earth and heaven coming together since the biologically produced milk points to the Divine nourishment and Christ himself has been seen "as Mother".[9]

In the book, a connection is also made between the circulation of sentimental images of St. Anne, such as that of the *Selbritt*[10] in the rest of Europe (German lands, Austria, France, Belgium, Italy—only a few isolated cases have been recorded in the latter), and the spread of the Cathars in those territories. According to some scholars, as will be detailed in Chap. 8, they were in contact with the Bogomils and continued their legacy. The fact that the painting of nursing scenes and the representation of *Anna Selbritt* ceased after these two sects dwindled almost into extinction show that my hypothesis is correct. This will not, however, be a volume on iconography or visual art in general; only one of its sections assembles images that, taken together, substantiate the rapport between,

[8] Bogomilism is a Gnostic sect founded in the First Bulgarian Empire during the reign of Tsar Peter I in the tenth century. It most probably arose in what is today the region of Macedonia as a response to the social stratification specific to the medieval society and as a form of political movement and opposition to the Bulgarian state and the Church. Among their ideas, which will be introduced in some detail in the main text of this book, the Bogomils called for a return to early Christianity, rejecting the Church hierarchy.

[9] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984 (first edition 1982).

[10] *Selbritt* is the representation (as statues or, rarely, paintings) of Anne, Mary as an adult, and Christ as a child or adolescent.

on the one hand, theological movements that had repercussions for discussions on spiritual nourishment and, on the other, the development of a specific painterly motif.

The publication contains eight chapters. Chapter 2 introduces the association between heavenly nurture and biological sustenance as it was conceived by the Ancient Greeks and Romans, by the Bible and the Church fathers, and by apocryphal literature. Chapter 3 delves into manifestations of the topic of milk in the experience of the martyrs and medieval mystics and also considers women experiencing and offering nourishment. Chapter 4 treats the emergence and the dissemination of the saints' cult. Chapter 5 focuses on the proliferation of St. Anne's veneration, its connection to her relics, and her role as an intercessor for people at the divine Court, initially in regard to barrenness and then to healing in general. Chapter 6 explores various literary sources concerned with St. Anne, including apocryphal texts, particularly as they relate to the saint milk-feeding her daughter. Chapter 7 deals with the visual consequences of the development of the cult of St. Anne, especially along the *Via Egnatia* between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries. Chapter 8 introduces the Bogomil sect and shows how the depiction of *Anna Galaktotrophousa* was a reaction to ideas propagated by its members. It points out that theological ideas have always informed iconography but that so far nothing has been written on the connection between Bogomilism and visual scenes referring to milk-nursing. Chapter 9 draws conclusions on the relation between biological and spiritual nourishment in Byzantine and medieval Christian culture. It also considers the popularity of St. Anne and her relevance to people's devotion.

CHAPTER 2

The Connection Between Heavenly Nurture and Biological Sustenance in the Ancient World

2.1 The Greco-Romans

In the Greek-Roman era a parallelism is hinged on the non-opposition between motherhood and virginity.[1] Artemis of the ancient Greece was the virgin goddess *par excellence*, and she was known under different names over a large geographical area. As the patroness of the woodlands, she is presented as chaste, indifferent to carnal love, and set against marriage. However, in the hypostasis of the Minoan Eileithyia, she was in charge of helping women with birthing and gynaecological problems.[2] The legendary Lycian poet Olen and the Achaeans celebrate Artemis's aspect of Eileithyia as mother of Eros, the divine quintessence of love.[3] Her aid was also invoked by parturients, because at the time of her delivery she did not cause any pain to her mother, Leto, and still in infancy, she

[1] The passage which follows (on the motherhood and milk in the Greek world) is indebted to Beverly Roberts Gaventa's book, *Our Mother St. Paul*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007 and Marco Merlini's article "The Pagan Artemis in the Virgin Mary Salutation at Great Lavra, Mount Athos", *Journal of Archaeomythology* 7, 2011, pp. 106–180.

[2] Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989, p. 109

[3] Pausanias, *Guide to Greece 1: Central Greece*, trans. P. Levi, London: Penguin Classics, 1979: 8.21.3 on Arcadia; J. L. Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults: A Guide*, London: Routledge, 2007.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_2

helped her in the long and painful labour to give birth to the twin Apollo.[4] Strabo calls Artemis the Great Mother despite also maintaining her virginity.[5] In a society where motherhood was strictly connected to fertility but not necessarily to love and sexual desire, Artemis's role in relation to female biology and the reproduction was not restricted to giving birth. At the heart of mystic rituals centred on the divine feminine, this goddess regulated also the sexual initiation[6] and behaviour of women.[7] Greek females acquired status and honour frequently with marriage and motherhood. Therefore, Artemis's task of preparing young girls for roles connected with these aspects of life was very important.[8] Her cult was centred in Ephesus, where she is portrayed with globe-like appendages as breasts.[9] At the present, alternative identifications for the protuberances on the chest of Artemis have been advanced,[10] but were certainly understood as breasts by third- and fourth-century Christian writers, who believed that she was able to breastfeed.[11] The Goddess was said to be, inter alia, the mother and ruler of everything.[12] Through her "nutrient breasts that overflow with sustaining milk",[13] she was worshipped as the legitimate wife of the city, sustainer of its inhabitants, preserver of family, protector of political agencies, and guarantor of the stability of the universe.[14] This is why the goddess was worshipped concomitantly by virgins, celibate priestesses, and married women.

[4] Callimachus, "Hymn 3 to Artemis", in *Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron, Aratus, in* A. W. Mair and G. R. Mair, trans. Loeb Classical Library 129, London: Heinemann, 1921, pp. 1 ff.

[5] Ariel Golan, *Prehistoric Religion, Mythology, Symbolism*, Jerusalem: Ariel Golan, 2003, p. 430.

[6] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985, p. 151.

[7] Lewandowski, "The representation of the Annunciation", p. 236.

[8] Rick Strelan, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996, p. 120.

[9] H. Koester (ed.), *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia,* Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, Harvard Theological Studies, 1995 [pp. 81–117], p. 95.

[10] C. M. Thomas, "At Home in the City of Artemis", in H. Koester (ed.), *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia*. 1995, pp. 86–87; Larson, *Ancient Greek Cults*, p. 110.

[11] L. R. Li Donnici, "The image of Artemis Ephesia in Greco-Roman Worship: A Reconstruction", *Harvard Theological Review*, 1992, 85:4 [pp. 389–415], p. 392.

[12] C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (eds.), *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, Doweners Grove and Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 2000, p. 318.

[13] LiDonnici, "The image of Artemis Ephesia in Greco-Roman Worship", pp. 408, 411.

[14] Ibid., p. 394.

When the Greeks established their first colonies, around 1000 BCE, they assimilated into Artemis,[15] a local Earth goddess who was known in the local mythology from about 7000 BCE.[16] The cultural contradictions motherhood-love and fertility-eros were made manifest through the antithesis virginity-maternity embodied by Artemis, who was worshipped at the same time as a virgin and generator of life. Mircea Eliade notes that it is a mystery how the coexistence of these conflicting elements resulted in shaping the identity of one goddess.[17] According to Rafal Lewandowski, this mixture of frequently opposing features reflects the pre-existence of a multitude of female archaic deities fused in one and refined by Greek religious mind.[18]

Scholars such as Marija Gimbutas and Rafal Lewandowski consider that she is the legitimate precursor of the Mother of God in Christianity.[19] Gimbutas believes that when Christianity arrived, it was Mary's turn to embody the contrast virginity-motherhood in a single goddess.[20] The problem with this interpretation is that Mary does not have the status of a goddess in Christianity; she is God's Mother in his incarnated hypostasis, Jesus Christ, and since for God everything is possible, he could have had a virgin as mother; therefore, Christianity is justified to assert this as true.

2.2 Scripture and Patristics

2.2.1 Nourishment in General

In the Bible, the Divine Liturgy, and Patristic literature, Christ is represented as the food of life or the bread from heaven, whereas Mary is pictured either as *his* source of nourishment, as the vehicle through which the sustenance that is Christ reaches humanity, or sometimes as the recipient

[15] M. E. Leibovici, *The Asiatic Artemis*; thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, Department of Classics, Montreal: McGill University, 1993.

[16] Evans and Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, 318.

[17] Mircea Eliade, *History of Religious Ideas*, trans. W. R. Trask, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, vol. 1, p. 196.

[18] Rafal Lewandowski, "The representation of the Annunciation at the refectory of Megisti Lavra", in *Mount Athos and Pre-Christian Antiquity*, Centre for the Preservation of Athonite Heritage, Thessaloniki, 2006 [233–248], p. 236.

[19] R. Lewandowski, "The representation of the Annunciation at the refectory of Megisti Lavra", p. 236.

[20] Marija Gimbutas, *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe: 6500–3500 B.C.*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974, p. 198.

of nurture herself. Metaphors involving food with reference to Christ are recurrent in the Gospels—one has only to think of him as bread, the true vine (John 15.1), and the water of everlasting life (John 4.14). But I will not follow here the thread that leads to discussions about the Eucharist; there is already considerable material published on this topic.

Instead, as announced, I will focus on nursing and milk as constituting particular metaphors (two of many) which illustrate the idea that God—both the Father and the Son, or rather the Godhead—is the Nourisher of humankind. He was represented sometimes as a [nursing] mother in the Old Testament, for instance in Job 21: 24 ("His breasts are full of milk") and in Isaiah 49.15, where it is said that the Lord cannot overlook us because a mother does not forget "her suckling child". (As God's "chosen" city and one of his special abodes, Jerusalem itself is considered a nurturing divine entity in the Old Covenant, as in Isaiah 66.13: "For thus says the Lord: … you shall be nursed [by Jerusalem, to whom God will 'extend prosperity']." The same is implied in Isaiah 66.10–11: the milk from its [Jerusalem's] consoling breast will make us "satisfied".) In the New Testament, the verb τρέφω/θρέφω—participle τρεφόμενος and τρεφομένους (which means both nourishing in general and breastfeeding)—is used in Mt. 6.26 and 25.35 in the general sense: "Look at the birds of the air: for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Mt. 6.26), and "For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in" (Mt. 25. 35).[21] The same verb also occurs in Luke 12.24 and 23.29, Acts 12.20, and Rev. 12.6,14. St. Paul uses it in a similar vein but adds an extra layer to its meaning; in Eph. 5.29 he asserts, "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church". He calls himself a mother in various places in the Gospel (to the point that makes Beverly Roberts Gaventa believe that maternal imagery is a topic or a "thread" in the Pauline letters[22]) and also a woman in labour. As this researcher indicates, the most complex of these passages, metaphorically speaking, is Gal. 4: 19: "My children, with whom I am in labor again until

[21] "ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅτι οὐ σπείρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἀποθήκας, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά"; "οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν; τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷοἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες• κύριε, πότε σε εἴδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν; ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν."

[22] Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother St. Paul*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, p. 4.

Christ is formed in you." Gaventa comments, "Here he is in the process of giving birth. [...] Paul remains in labor, not until the child is born, but until Christ is born in the child."[23] The Apostle uses frequently the language of both an infant and a mother nursing her child, sometimes with reference to himself; such instances are 1 Thess 2: 7 and 5: 3; Gal 1: 15 and 4: 19, 1 Cor 3: 1–2 and 15: 8, and Rom 8: 22. But, as Gaventa continues, "It extends, however, to refer to Paul's role as a nurturer of communities who know themselves to be in the hands of the God who will not leave the world alone, who reclaims the world for God alone".[24] John, in 16: 21, speaks about the joy of motherhood.

Among the fathers of the Church, Augustine (354–430) refers to Christ as to a mother hen at the outset of his Sermon 264.[25] Jesus himself used such an image when comparing His activity with that of a hen that gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them from harm (Matt. 23: 37). The Bishop from Hippo also describes Christ as Father and Lord, the Church as Mother and Servant (*ancilla*), and the devout as the "sons of that *ancilla*".[26] He uses the same passage from the New Testament which Paul does (Eph. 5: 29) and repeats that in the marriage between Jesus and the Church, Christ "nourishes and cherishes" (*nutrit et fovet*) Her just as humans do with their bodies—with their "flesh".[27] Robert O'Connell reproduces some of Augustine's thoughts: "If the Christian would be strong [*firmus*], let him be nourished by this maternal warmth. Let believers enter, therefore, under the wings of this Divine Wisdom, the Incarnate Christ, Who on behalf of Her chicks became weak [*infirma*], to the point of dying for them[28]"; he also writes about the implications of these ideas. The substance of people's food is faith; it ensures the "growth of our spiritual wings", enabling us to reach a more mature understanding of God's Logos and to increase our chances of salvation, that is, to achieve the final return to the "unmediated vision of God we once enjoyed".[29]

[23] Gaventa, *Our Mother St. Paul*, p. 5.

[24] Gaventa, *Our Mother St. Paul*, "Introduction", p. xi.

[25] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 264", 2, in Saint Augustine, *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Mother Mary Sarah Muldowney, New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1959, p. 397.

[26] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 131", 3, in *The Works of Saint Augustine*; electronic edition.

[27] Saint Augustine, "En 88, Sermon 2", 14; idem.

[28] Robert J. O'Connell, *Soundings in St. Augustine's imagination*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1994, p. 117.

[29] Saint Augustine, "En 83, Sermon 7"; *The Works of Saint Augustine*; electronic edition.

Later in history, Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) and Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) spoke about Jesus as a mother. St. Anselm, by repeatedly (and rhetorically one could claim, since God and his Word are to be found in people's hearts) asking where the "beloved" are to be found, indicates how hungry he is to meet God the Mother, "the strength of my heart, my portion for ever"[30] for whose love he faints "with hunger",[31] and to whom he declares that "I am sick from love".[32] He further affirms, "'My soul refuses comfort,' unless from you, my dear. 'Whom have I in heaven but you, and what do I desire upon earth beside you?'"[33] Anselm prays also to the Mother of God, thus: "By your blessed virginity you have made all integrity sacred,/and by your glorious child-bearing/you have brought salvation to all fruitfulness/[…] Who can more easily pardon for the accused/by her intercession,/than she who gave milk to him/who justly punishes or mercifully pardons all and each one?"[34] And in another prayer to her, he reaffirms his love for both her and Christ thus, "Mother of our lover who carried him in her womb/and was willing to give him milk at her breast—/are you not able or are you unwilling to grant your love/to those who ask it?/So I venerate you both,/as far as my heart is equal to it;/I prefer you both,/as much as my soul can;/and I serve you both,/as far as my flesh may./And in this let my life be consummated/that for all eternity all my being may sing/'Blessed by the Lord for ever. Amen.'"[35]

Perhaps this is one of the places where the link between the rendering of God or Christ as givers of milk and that of *Maria lactans* is expressed in the clearest manner. (By implication, Mary's breastfeeding mother, Anne, not mentioned by Anselm, but by the earlier Church fathers, is important for Christians.) Obviously, in the case of God and Christ, this imagery is richer since Jesus and the Father [God] are not only motherly but especially Eucharistic figures. One of the most suggestive evidences towards Christ's maternal characteristics is in Anselm's work itself, thus: "you [Saviour] accepted me into your care so that nothing could harm my soul against my will. And lo, even before I cleaved to you as you counselled,

[30] Anselm of Canterbury, "Prayer to Christ", in Benedicta Ward (ed. and trans.), *Saint Anselm. Prayers and Meditations*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 97.

[31] Anselm, "Meditation on Human Redemption", idem, p. 237.

[32] Anselm, "Prayer to Christ", idem, p. 97.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Anselm, "Prayer to St. Mary (2)", idem, p. 110.

[35] Anselm, "Prayer to Mary (3)", idem, p. 126.

you did not let me fell into hell, but looked forward to when I should cleave to you; even then you were keeping your promises."[36] Further he admits to him that, "I owe you all my being", and thus, "[I am] completely held in your care".[37] Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) affirms explicitly: "In our Mother Christ we grow. In His Mercy He reform and redeems us,/and by virtue of His passion, death and resurrection we are made one with Him./This is how our Mother works mercifully for all His children who are yielding and obedient/Jesus Christ who does good against evil is our true Mother./A Mother may feed a child with her own milk,/but our precious Mother, Jesus, feeds us with Himself,/courteously and tenderly, with the blessed Sacrament/the blessed food of life./As truly as God is our Father, so truly also God is our Mother."[38] Again, in her fourteenth revelation, when expounding on the Trinity, Julian writes about Jesus and compares him to a mother who is wise, loving, and merciful. "And our saviour is oure very moder, in whome we be endlesly borne and never shall come out of him. Plentuosly, fully, and swetely was his shewde; and it is spoken of it in the furst, wher it saide: 'We be all in him beclodet'."[39] The anchoress believed that the mother's role was the truest of all jobs on earth. She emphasised this by explaining how the bond between mother and child is the only earthly relationship that comes close to the relationship a person can have with Jesus. She also connected God with motherhood in terms of "the foundation of our nature's creation", "the taking of our nature, where the motherhood of grace begins", "the motherhood at work", "our mother substantially".[40] She wrote metaphorically of Jesus in connection with conception, nursing, labour, and upbringing (but saw him as our brother as well: "For he is oure moder, broder, and saviour"[41]). Also Julian believed that "the trinite is oure fader, *and the depe wisdom of the trinite is oure moder*, and the greate love

[36] Anselm, "Proslogion", idem, p. 241.

[37] Anselm, "Meditation on Human Redemption", idem, p. 237.

[38] Julian of Norwich, *Masters of Prayer*, edited by P. Searle (Foreword and notes), London: CIO Publishing for the General Synod of Education, 1984, pp. 31–32.

[39] Julian of Norwich, "A Revelation of Love"/Fourteenth Revelation 57. 40, N. Watson and J. Jenkins (eds.), *The writings of Julian of Norwich. A vision showed to a Devout Woman and a Revelation of Love*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2006, [pp. 123–381], p. 305.

[40] Julian of Norwich, "A Revelation of Love"/Fourteenth Revelation 58. 25, *The writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 307.

[41] Idem.

of the trinite is oure lorde".[42] She affirmed that the "seconde person of the trinite is oure moder in kind of oure substantial making, in whom we are grounded and roted, and he is oure moder of mercy in oure sensualite taking".[43] And that "oure moder is to us diverse manner werking, in whom oure pertes be kepte underperted. For in oure moder Crist we profit and encrese [because] in mercy he reformeth and restoreth us, and by the vertu of his passion, his deth, and his uprising oneth us to our substance."[44]

Obviously, in the case of God and Christ, this imagery is richer since Jesus and the Father have been interpreted not only as motherly but especially as Eucharistic figures. Other Christian authors have read Mary as being the vessel for Christ; since he is the universal Nourisher, such an attribute glorifies her more greatly than any of her other attributes do. They believe that this idea was foreseen in the Old Testament through images such as the jar containing *manna*, the altar inside the tabernacle, and the oven in which the offering for Yahweh was baked. As we shall see, the Church fathers (most of them living in the Byzantine Empire or in its area of influence) believed that the sustenance the Virgin offered to the Son of God did not originate in her own body. In the Middle Ages, she was increasingly viewed as an essential nexus in the relationship between God and humankind, being either a source of nourishment or an intercessor for everyone who asked for her help.

Many specialists—among them Elizabeth S. Bolman,[45] Mary Cunningham,[46] and Zuzana Skalova[47]—have interpreted the nourishment

[42] Idem; emphasis added.

[43] Idem, p. 309.

[44] Idem.

[45] Elizabeth S. Bolman, "The Coptic *Galaktotrophousa* Revisited", *Abstracts of Papers: Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies in Leiden*, 27 August–2 September 2000, Leiden, 2000, and "The enigmatic Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*" in Maria Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 13–19. See also her Fellowship Report online, Dumbarton Oaks, 2004/2005, retrieved June 2012; *Milk and Salvation: The Nursing Mother of God in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming within the series Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion. See also Hildreth York and Betty L. Schlossman, "She Shall Be Called Woman: Ancient near Eastern Sources of Imagery", in *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 2/no. 2, 1982, pp. 37–41.

[46] Mary B. Cunningham, "Divine Banquet", in Leslie Brubaker, Kallirroe Linardou (eds.), *Eat, Drink, and Be Merry (Luke 12:19). Food and Wine in Byzantium*, Papers of the 37th Annual Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.

[47] Zuzana Skalova, "The Icon of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* in the Coptic Monastery of St Anthony the Great at the Red Sea, Egypt: A preliminary note", in K. Ciggaar and H. Teule

the *Theotokos* provided for Jesus as being similar in nature to that which He himself offers to humankind, as stated in John 6: 35: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

2.2.2 Milk Nourishing

With respect to specifically breastfeeding, we are used to think of it as a rather private biological act. Still, if additionally it is invested with spiritual value and is seen not only as a physical but also as a metaphysical reality, then its description in terms usually employed when referring to sacred realities is not as surprising as it might first appear. In this light, even its depiction in an icon or a fresco is justified. The Old Testament is rich in references to milk. In some of those it is mentioned together with honey (Ex. 3: 8; Deut. 26: 9).[48] In the New Testament the Logos as the milk that feeds people, τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, is commented on in 1 Peter 2.2; other passages as, for instance, Gal. 4.19, 1 Cor. 4.14, and the Gospel of John refer to children in a spiritual context. One particular apocryphal writing, *Apocalypse of Paul*, is to be recorded since it talks about milk in 22, 23, 25, 26, and 31.[49]

(eds.), *East and West in the Crusader States: Context-Contacts-Confrontations: Acta of the Congress Held at Hernen Castle in September 2000*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 125, Leuven and Dudley M.A., 2003, pp. 235–264.

[48] Exodus 3: 8: "So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusi"; Deuteronomy 26: 9, "And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee."

[49] Jan N. Bremmer and Istvan Czachesz (eds.), *The Visio Pauli and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Paul*, Leuven: Peeters, 2007 (Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha, 9); Eileen Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante*, New York: Italica Press, 1989, pp. 13–46, provides an English translation of the Latin text; Lenka Jiroušková, *Die Visio Pauli: Wege und Wandlungen einer orientalischen Apokryphe im lateinischen Mittelalter unter Einschluß der alttsechischen und deutschsprachigen Textzeugen*, Leiden: Brill, 2006 (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte, 34); Theodore Silverstein and Anthony Hilhorst (eds.), *Apocalypse of Paul*, Geneva: P. Cramer, 1997; J. van Ruiten, "The Four Rivers of Eden in the Apocalypse of Paul (Visio Pauli): The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 2:10–14 and the Apocalypse of Paul 23:4", in García Martínez, Florentino, and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (eds.), *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*, Leiden: Brill, 2003; Nikolaos H. Trunte, *Reiseführer durch das Jenseits: die Apokalypse des Paulus in*

Among the Church Fathers, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215 AD) mentions milk a few times. For him, Christ is not only a nurse but also the milk he promised to his people—it is "the drink of immortality"[50] and the Logos; as such it has the same composition as his flesh and blood. The medical knowledge of his time informed Clement that milk is "the most succulent and subtle part"[51] of the blood and that it is white in order to be less frightening to people, especially to the young ones. (Hippocrates, 460–377 BC, believed that milk is blood, and his theory was still prevalent in the second Christianity century.[52]) Galen of Pergamon (c. 129–c. 210 AD) advised people to consume milk and its products and explained their qualities; he also used it as a medicine.[53] Clement understands milk, like St. Paul whose sayings he quotes, as being the metaphor for the "simple, true, natural and spiritual nourishment" that the Logos ("Christ's milk") is; it constitutes the "perfect" sustenance for the righteous in order for them to attain eternal life. The "already perfected" drink it with joy; the act of imparting in Christ's Logos leads to the knowledge of truth; those who are yet as "little children" in faith, just suck the milk [to live].[54] When, in *Cohortatio ad Gentes*, the theologian from Alexandria says that people can correct their dogmatic mistakes as they mature in faith, he again makes the analogy with milk and rhetorically asks why "do we not still use our first nourishment, milk, to which our nurses accustomed us from the time of our birth" (?). The answer he provides is that we no longer do this because

der Slavia Orthodoxa, München, Berlin, and Washington, D. C.: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2013 (Slavistische Beiträge 490).

[50] Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus", PG 8, 300–301, or Henri-Irénée Marrou (ed.), *Paed*., l.6. 36, pp. 174–175. More information on the meaning of Mary's milk in Egyptian Patristics is to be found in Elizabeth S. Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa and the cult of Virgin Mary in Egypt" in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, pp. 13–22.

[51] Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus", PG 8, 1. 6. 300–301; Marrou (ed.), *Clément d'Alexandrie. Le pedagogue*, trans. M. Harl, I. 6. 39. 1, 2, (SC, 70), Éditions du CERF, Paris, 1960, vol. 1, pp. 182–183. See also Clementis Alexandrini/M. Marcovich and J. C. M. van Winden (eds.), *Paedagogus*, Leiden, Boston, Brill: 2002.

[52] Hippocrates, *Glands*, 16, trans. P. Potter, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 8, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1988, p. 123. See also Elizabeth M. Craik, *The Hippocratic Treatise on Glands*, Boston: Brill, 2000, pp. xvi, xvii, 81.

[53] Galen of Pergamon, *Galen: on food and diet*, Mark Grant (transl. and notes), London: Routledge, 2000, Book 3, pp. 163–168 and on cheese, pp. 169–170.

[54] Clement of Alexandria, "Paedagogus", PG 8. 300–301; Marrou (ed.), *Paedagogus*, I. 6, pp. 182–183.

"we have corrected ourselves".[55] In further support to the idea of divine sustenance, in Chap. 9 of the same work, Clement quotes the urging of the Psalm: "Taste and see that Christ is good!" (Ps. 34.8).[56]

St. Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373) states in his Nativity hymn that Jesus "is the Breast of Life, and the Breath of Life; the dead suck from His life and revive. Without the breath of the air no man lived, without the Might of the Son no man subsisted. On His living breath that quickened all, depend the spirits that are above and that are beneath. When he suckled the milk of Mary, He was suckling all with Life."[57] And further he writes: "Whilst He was increasing in stature among the poor, from an abundant treasury *He was nourishing all*! While she that anointed Him was anointing Him, with His dew and his rain He was dropping fatness over all! […] It was by Power from Him that Mary was able to bear in Her bosom Him that bears up all things! It was from the great storehouse of all creatures; Mary gave him all which she did give Him! She gave Him milk from Himself that prepared it, she gave Him food from Himself that made it! He gave milk unto Mary as God: again He sucked it from her, as the Son of Man."[58]

Another father of the Church, Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395), describes how Jesus Christ introduced people around him to the mysteries

[55] Clement of Alexandria, "Cohortatio ad Gentes", PG 8. 10. 201A, and Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (eds.), "Answer the objection of the Heathen that it was not right to abandon the custom of their fathers", in *The Works of Clement of Alexandria*, vol. 1, Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325 (vol. 4), T & T Clark, Edinburg, 1857, p. 85. See also Ph. Schaff, and H. Wace (eds.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, "Exhortation to the Heathen", vol. 14: *I Nice AD 325*, H. R. Percival (trans.), Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900; apparently it has been reprinted by Hendrickson Publishers, 2012, but I have not managed to see this new edition.

[56] Clement of Alexandria, "Cohortatio ad Gentes", PG 8. 9. 199B, and A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, "Exhortation to the Heathen. That those grievously six who despise or neglect God's gracious calling", in *The Works of Clement of Alexandria*, p. 83.

[57] Ephrem the Syrian/J. B. Morris (ed. and trans.), "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem the Syrian. Hymn ('Rhythm') the Third", in *Selected Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian*, John Henry Parker, Oxford, 1847, p. 18; the translation has been slightly modified. See also Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 4" (H. Nat. 4), in *Hymns*, trans. Kathleen E. McVey, Classics of Western Spirituality, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1989. There are aspects in Morris's translation that better suit the purpose of the book.

[58] Ephrem the Syrian/Morris (ed. and trans.), "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem the Syrian. Hymn the Third", pp. 23–24; the translation has been slightly modified and emphasis added. Also in Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 3" in *Hymns*, trans. K. E. McVey.

of the Resurrection gradually, by healing various diseases, before bringing back to life Lazarus and eventually himself. He acted in the same manner a mother firstly feeds an infant with her milk and changes it to bread when it grows up and can consume it.[59] Also, in his *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, Nyssen speaks about the Bridegroom's kisses as being identical in significance to the milk that flows from his breasts [μαστοί][60] (which "are better than wine"[61]). The breasts are important for their proximity to the heart ("the treasure house"), because, as the bishop says, "from it the breasts acquire their abundance of the divine milk on which, 'according to the proportion of faith' (Rom. 12: 6), the soul feeds as it draws in grace".[62] The heart nourishes the soul with divine teaching: "For someone who conceives of the heart as the hidden and ineffable Power of the Godhead will surely not be mistaken, and one may reasonably interpret breasts as the beneficent activities of the divine Power on our behalf. Through them God nurtures the life of each individual, bestowing the food that is appropriate to each of those who receive it."[63] (For Origen, the breasts in *Canticum Canticorum* are also connected with the heart; they are its "governing principle"[64]). The heart is called sometimes "bosom" or "chest"—at the Last Supper, John reclined on that of Christ or rather on his breast—and it not only symbolises love but it is also the place where "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (Col. 2: 3). Therefore, "John is said to have rested upon the governing principle of Christ's heart

[59] The Lord "makes first of all a prelude of the power of resurrection in healing various diseases" by "nourishing and fostering with miracles the weakness of the human mind, like some babe not fully grown"; Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio/On the Making of Man*, PG 44; trans. *On the Making of Man*, in H. Wace and P. Schaff (eds.), A Selected Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (NPNF), vol. V, 1893, p. 415.

[60] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs/*Gregory of Nyssa; translated with an introduction and notes by Richard. A. Norris Jr., in John T. Fitzgerald (gen. ed.), *Writings from the Greco-Roman World*, vol. 13, The Society of Biblical Literature, 2012, Atlanta, GA, p. 35. See also *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Commentary on the Song of Songs*, trans. Casimir McCambley, Archbishop Iakovos Library of Ecclesiastical and Historical Sources, no. 12, Brookline: Hellenic College Press, 1987.

[61] The Song of Songs, 2. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,/For your breasts are better than wine". 4. "[…] let us rejoice and be glad in thee; we will love thy breasts more than wine: righteousness loves thee." *Canticum Canticorum. Vetus Latina*, Albertus Vaccari S. J. (ed.), trans. A. S. Hieronymo, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959, p. 19.

[62] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, p. 35.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Origen, *Canticum Canticorum/The Song of Songs: commentary and homilies*, edited by R.P. Lawson, Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1957.

and upon the inner meaning of his teaching".[65] In his homilies on the Biblical chant, Gregory understands the soul as being the bride who, in a spiritual marriage with God, is hungry for the "knowledge of truth"[66]; the bishop is telling with conviction to his readers/listeners that once the soul is loved, "she" will "sustain you"; therefore it needs to be "fortified", and "inseparable" from her bridegroom (Christ),[67] and be "one spirit" with him.[68] The comparison the virgin bride makes between the milk from the divine breast and the wine, giving pre-eminence to the former (despite the fact that wine brings gladness, cf. Ps 103: 15), as well as her lauding of "the fragrance/of your perfumed ointments", which is "better than all spices", means for the Nyssen that all human wisdom and knowledge of the world as well as every faculty of discernment, insight, and understanding are incapable of matching the substance of the divine teaching. For what flows from the breasts is milk, and milk is the food of infants (as we noticed that St. Paul underscored). Wine, because of its strength and warmth, is the delight of adults. Nevertheless, that which is most mature and perfect in the pagan sagacity is a lesser thing than "the most childish teaching" of God's Word. Hence the divine breasts are better than wine. (For Gregory the Great, c. 540–604, "wine" refers to the "knowledge of the Law" proffered by the Old Testament, and "breasts" to that found in the Christian teaching. Because, "[w]hen the Lord came, he wished to preach his own wisdom through the flesh. He therefore presented it as milk in breasts of flesh so that we who had been incapable of grasping the wisdom of the Lord in his divinity might be able to perceive it in his Incarnation. This is why it is worthwhile to praise his breasts, for the lowering of his preaching to our level has driven into our hearts what the teaching of the Law was unable to do. Yes, the preaching of the Incarnation has nourished us more than the teaching of the Law. Therefore let the Church say, 'Your breasts are much better than wine.'")[69] The author placed the word "breasts", "a

[65] Origen, *The Song of Song,* especially Book 1, pp. 58, 63. See also Richard A. Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, Michigan and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, UK, 2003, p. 27.

[66] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, pp. 14–15.

[67] Idem, pp. 22–23.

[68] Idem, pp. 26–27.

[69] Gregory the Great, "Excerpts from the Books of Blessed Gregory on the Song of Songs", edited by Mark DelCogliano (trans., and Introduction), *Gregory the Great on the Song of Songs*, Collegeville, M.N.: Cistercian Publications, Liturgical Press, 2012; the book contains also the *Exposition on the Song of Songs.* See also "Brevis commentatio in Canticum

thing proper for a woman", at the beginning of his song, "in order that he may make it clear that he is speaking in figures"[70]; since he does this in reference to the bridegroom, it would have been illogical for this expression to be taken literally. Nonetheless, theologians have had a fascination with the word "breasts" in the Songs of Songs. For instance, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), whose conception on milk and spiritual nourishment will be presented at some length later in the chapter (therefore, we will not elaborate on this here), wrote two sermons on this subject matter and also mentioned it in other places.[71] He considers that "breasts" in Solomon's view represent the divine attributes of mercy and patience and the human virtues of compassion and sympathy; they also symbolise "the doctrine and means of grace dispensed by the Church".[72]

Going back to Gregory of Nyssa, who comments further on other aspects of the *Canticum Canticorum*, we shall indicate that he considers the verse that refers to the *fragrance* of the divine *perfumed ointments* (which is more pleasant than any sweet scent among the spices) as intimating virtues (wisdom, temperance, justice, courage, prudence, etc.); Nyssen believes that each individual assumes a different scent in accord with his own power and choice.[73] Here the bishop points to the "divine fragrance"

canticorum" 13 by William of St. Thierry, PL vol. 184; 407–435; William of St Thierry, "A Brief Commentary on the Song of Songs", in Denys Turner (ed. and trans.), *Eros and Allegory: Medieval Exegesis of the Song of Songs*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI, 1995, pp. 275–290. See also Patrick Verbraken (ed.), *Sancti Gregorii Magni Expositiones in Canticum Canticorum in Librum Primum Regum*, CCSL 144, Brepolis: Turnhout, 1963, pp. 3–46; PL vol. 79, 471–492, and Richard A. Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, Michigan and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 28.

70 *Bibliorum Sacrum* cum *Glossa ordinaria,* vol. 3, and PL 113, 1117; see also Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, p. 30.

71 Bernard of Clairvaux, "On the breasts of the Bride and Bridegroom", "The breasts and their perfumes", and also "In the room of the King", in Killian Walsh (ed. and trans.), *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, Kalamazoo, M.I.: Cistercian Publications-CSS, 2005, vols. 1–2; sermons 9, 10, and 24.

72 Thomas Cattoi and June McDaniel, *Perceiving the Divine through the human body*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 168. Some suggestions might be found also in David Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing. Understanding the senses in society*, Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2014.

73 Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, pp. 36–39; Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, p. 30.

of God's name[74]—and one can add here that it also has a "divine sweetness" (as that of milk, especially the maternal one). If one takes into account that all human senses are involved in the liturgical experience, which is the closest earthly "meeting" with God, it becomes obvious that he is right. Vision is necessary to see the letters in the Scriptures and the icons, hearing to listen to the chants, taste to appreciate the bread and wine (and in some areas, the milk and honey) of the Eucharist, smell to delight in the burn of the incense, and touch in most of these. Nyssen further emphasises that we learn

> in an incidental way, another truth through the philosophical wisdom of this book [The Song of Songs]: that there is in us a dual activity of perception, the one bodily, the other more divine … For there is a certain analogy between the sense organs of the body and the operations of the soul. And it is this we learn from the words before us. For both wine and milk are discerned by the sense of taste, but when they are intelligible things, the power of the soul that grasps them is an intellectual power.[75]

As if supporting this, William of St. Thierry, c. 1075–1148, speaks about "your sweet breasts", which are "the primary nourishment that your grace affords"; for him they symbolise "sweetness" and a "clear consciousness"; because of that they are "better than any wine of worldly wisdom or any joy of fleshly pleasure".[76]

In interpreting the expression "the perfumed ointment emptied out"[77] in the *Song of Songs*, Gregory of Nyssa proposes that it might be a reminder that the divine power is inaccessible and incapable of being contained by the human soul and mind, which are limited; the same with our words that cannot completely exhaust the richness of the divine reality. As stated in

[74] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, pp. 38–39; Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, pp. 32–33.

[75] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, pp. 34–37. See commentaries on these topics in Hans Boersma, Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa. An Anagogical Approach, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 94–95.

[76] William of St. Thierry, "Brevis commentatio in Canticum canticorum" 13, PL vol. 184; 407–435; William of St. Thierry, "A Brief Commentary on the Song of Songs", in D. Turner (ed. and trans.), *Eros and Allegory,* pp. 275–290, and in Mark DelCogliano (ed., trans., and Introduction), *Gregory the Great on the Song of Songs*, Collegeville, M.N.: Liturgical Press, 2012. See also Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, p. 29.

[77] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in Homilies on the Song of Songs, pp. 38–41; Norris (ed. and trans.), *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, pp. 32–33.

the citation above, the soul, the mind, and the words can access it to a certain extent but cannot penetrate its essence. Perhaps this is why, as we shall see further, the Patriarchs of the Church felt the need to stress that God as the Nourisher of humankind filled the human breasts that were to feed Christ as a child—and also that which nourished St. Anne's daughter.

The understanding of Mary's own milk as the Logos that nourishes humankind also has a long tradition. The Church fathers believed that the milk in the breasts of the *Theotokos* originates in God and not in Mary's own body. Clement, for instance, writes that since Mary was a virgin, she could not have lactated naturally. In a dialogue, Cyril of Alexandria (376–444) states that the milk which she offers to Christ the child was given to her "in the heavens".[78] Theologians, preachers, and also hymnographers consistently emphasised the relationship between the Virgin and her Son, thus qualifying her salvific role; in such cases the only act she could perform was to intercede with Him on behalf of people. Nevertheless, as a minority of such educators have affirmed, in relation to the milk in her breasts, Mary's role was not exclusively restricted to that of a receptacle, but she is sometimes represented as having initiative concerning it. For instance, in the *History of Aur*,[79] Mary refused to give milk to some Egyptian magicians because they wanted to use it for the selfish, non-natural purpose of obtaining immortality. In this case, it is evident that the Mother of God not only has milk but "she also has power over it" and can

[78] Cyril of Alexandria, "The Discourse on Mary Theotokos", British Museum, Ms. Oriental 6782 [AD 990], in Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *Miscellaneous Coptic texts in the dialect of Upper Egypt*, London: British Museum, and London: AMS Press, 1915, fols. 32bl–32b2, trans. on p. 720.

[79] E. A. T. W. Budge (ed. and trans.), "History of Aur", Part II, 7 in *Egyptian Tales and Legends: Pagan, Christian, Muslim*, New York: Dover Publications, 2002, pp. 247–264. Additionally, Cyril of Alexandria, "The Discourse on Mary Theotokos", Ms. Oriental 6784, in Budge (ed. and trans.), *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*. According to Cyril, Mary testifies about her milk: "My womb grew large without [the help of] a man, and my breasts became full of milk. I never held converse with any young man. I suffered no pain when I brought forth. I was not frightened. I saw my Child. I did not know whence I had conceived"; fols. 31b 1 and 31 b 2, pp. 49–74, trans. on p. 719; for other milk references see also pp. 717–719. In Ms. Oriental 67,842, the same collection, Epiphanius of Salamis says "Blessed are thy breasts wherewith thou didst nourish the Creator for three years", fol. 26 b 1, trans. on p. 714; further mention of Mary's breasts is on p. 701. He also refers generally to her parents and ancestors on pp. 701–702.

decide to whom she will offer it. Bolman flags out this reality when reiterating that legend.[80]

In Byzantine sermons and hymns the verb τρέφω (to nourish, to feed) is employed to convey both meanings which food, in general, and milk in particular have—the biological as well as the spiritual. Andrew of Crete (c. 650 to 712–740?), in his first homily on the Nativity of Mary, writes that "As a new form of nourishment for her [the *Theotokos*], he who after a short time would be fed by her milk, meanwhile nourished the one who would nourish [him], without himself being present". Andrew even calls the Holy Spirit a nurse in this context: "And the Holy Spirit [thus] became the nurse of the Virgin until her manifestation in Israel."[81] An early Christian writer who saw milk-nursing as a basis for spiritual development and filiation was St. Romanos the Melodist in the sixth century; we shall detail later his contribution on this issue.[82]

Skalova combines information from the Fathers' writings with that from other sources and reminds readers that in the Christianity of the Near East the image of Christ child being breastfeed is seen as an embodiment of "the metaphor for the Divine Logos",[83] and Denise Kimber Buell indicates that in the same geographical area the nurses still call the first flow of maternal milk *manna*.[84] Caroline Walker Bynum asserts that the ideas expressed above have been reiterated in later historical periods, adds

[80] E. S. Botman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa", in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, p. 19.

[81] St. Andrew of Crete, "In Nativitatem B. Mariae I/On the Nativity of the Supremely Holy Theotokos", PG 97. 820, in Mary B. Cunningham (trans.), in *Wider than Heaven. Eight-century Homilies on the Mother of God*, Crestwood, N. Y.: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008, p. 84. See also CPG 8171 (ed. M. Geerard *et alii*), and BHG 1080 (ed. François Halkin).

[82] Romanus Melodus uses τρέφω in his kontakion "on the multiplication of the loaves" (13; 83 Kr.), in Paul Maas and Constantine Athanasius Trypanis (eds.), *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica genuina*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, pp. 94–101. See also the English translation edited by Marjorie Carpenter, *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine melodist*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1970, vol. 1, pp. 127–136. Also, the verb is used in the Akathistos at oikos 13, line 10: χαῖρε, δένδρον ἀγλαόκαρπον, ἐκ οὗ τρέφονται πιστοί [rejoice, tree of glorious fruit on which the faithful feed], in C. A. Trypanis, "Fourteen early Byzantine cantica", in *Wiener byzantinistische Studien* 5, 1968, 35. 276. 6–7, 280. 6–7.

[83] Skalova, "The Icon of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa*", p. 244. On the same ideas, see also Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (eds. and trans.), *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986, 1998.

[84] Denise Kimber Buell, *Making Christians*: *Clement of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Legitimacy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 159–161.

new dimensions to the connection to earthly heavenly sustenance, and shows concrete ways in which people experienced it in medieval times: "I argue that images of food and drink, of brimming fountains and streams of blood [NB and milk], which are used with special intensity by thirteenth-century women, express desire for direct, almost physical contact with Christ."[85] One can understand why in the sixteenth century, when the veneration concerning the relics of St. Anne—the holy person associated to the highest extent with milk—reached a climax in Europe, a lactating fountain was erected in Nűrenberg.[86]

Even though the preoccupation with maternal milk-feeding in various forms has been a long lasting one, nowadays it is less so. The Orthodox Church, for instance, still recognises the importance of nourishment, particularly of suckling, by dedicating a feast to the Mother of God Breastfeeding [*Galaktotrophousa*]; this is celebrated on 12th January. How can we explain this enduring concern for milk in a theological context? A part of the explanation has been provided above through biblical and eastern Christian Patristic references.

In addition, we can point out that in the West, Augustine (354–430) considered that the image of a human mother or a wet nurse feeding the child in their care is quintessential for both spiritual and biological nourishment. But for him other people—even men—could also take (and indeed have taken) the role of a mother. The bishop of Hippo has firstly God in his mind when deploying motherly imagery (because He is both merciful and just—as mothers are); he states "When He came to us robed in flesh, He turned His Wisdom into milk for us".[87] But the prelate also applies this analogy to the Church, to Moses who took care of the Israelites with maternal love ("his love is almost that of a mother"; "Moses's maternal instincts were roused"),[88] to St. Paul's who describes himself as being a parent and "an instructor in Christ" (which nurses usually are) in 1 Cor.

[85] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 8.

[86] C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987, Plate 16, black and white. The caption says: "Fountain of the Virtues in Nűrenberg; all seven allegorical figures lactate as a symbol of the fertility of virtue. Several of the figures also provide nurture in other way, by offering fruit, a chalice, or a jug."

[87] Saint Augustine, "En 30, Sermon 1", 9; *The Works of Saint Augustine*; electronic edition (second release for the Bodleian Library; retrieved April 2014); Charlottesville, Virginia: InteLex Corporation, 2001—edition information: ISBN: 978-1-57085-657-0.

[88] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 88", 24; idem.

4: 14–16 and Heb. 5.12–14 (where he also mentions milk as a nourishment for the "babes" into faith), in which he had to give to those people who were like "little ones" "milk to drink, not meat" or "solid food" and to himself when performing for the recently baptised "the sweet offices of a nurse".[89]

Inserting some elements from his personal history in an imaginary dialogue with the Creator, he writes in this context about his mother Monica and the wet nurse who fed him as a baby: "I was welcomed by the consolations of human milk; but it was not my mother or my nurse who made any decision to fill their breasts, but you who through them gave me infant food, in accordance with your ordinance and the riches which are deep in the natural order. You also granted me not to wish for more than you were giving, and to my nurses the desire to give me what you gave them. For by an impulse which you control their instinctive wish was to give me the milk which they had in abundance from you. For the good which came from them was a good for them; yet it was not from them but through them. Indeed all good things come from you, O God, and 'from my God is *all my salvation*' (2 Sam. 23: 5)."[90]

Augustine, on another level of discussion—the spiritual—also often speaks about our "milk of faith"[91] and its connection to the "Wisdom of God". He also expresses the idea of a protective and universal Nourisher (and about himself suckling at God's breast, cf. 4.1). God is ultimately the Mother and so is his incarnate Wisdom (cf. Proverbs 5.1, 19).

The bishop explains, as Clement did earlier, that once people grow up spiritually, they feed through "contemplative union" with God because it is He: "Who creates you. You are being suckled, praise Him; being fed, praise Him. But to what end this suckling and feeding? You are being nourished to advance in age and wisdom."[92] He cautions listeners to his sermon—and us, his readers—about the radical difference between what is taking place when the body of a mother transforms any other food into milk and what happens when the Word of God becomes incarnate: the

[89] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 353", 1.

[90] Saint Augustine, *Confessions,* trans. Henry Chadwick, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 6–7; emphasis added.

[91] Saint Augustine, "En 30, Sermon 1", 9 and "Sermon 2", 1; *The Works of Saint Augustine*; electronic edition (second release for the Bodleian Library; retrieved April 2014); see comments on this "Enarratione/Exposition", in R. J. O'Connell, *Soundings in St. Augustine's imagination*, pp. 116–122 (for the "milk of faith", p. 120).

[92] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 216", 7; idem.

difference consists in the fact that "[the] Word, remaining unchangeably itself, assumed flesh, in order to be in some way combined with it. It did not dissolve, nor change what it is in order to speak to you through your condition; he was not transmuted and changed into a man. Being nonconvertible, you see, and unchangeable, and remaining altogether inviolable, he became what you are in relation to you, remaining what he is in himself in relation to the Father."[93]

It is worth underlining that, as already mentioned, milk is sometimes accompanied by other foods: for instance, in the Coptic baptismal Eucharist a cup with milk and honey was given to the catechumen.[94] Also St. Ephrem the Syrian affirms that the Magi, in addition to bringing "praise" and a "suckling lamb for the Paschal Lamb" at Nativity, also offered meat ("clean flesh") for Joseph to eat and "sweet milk" for the Virgin to drink.[95] They returned to Christ-God, by physical means, that nourishment which God had already offered them both spiritually and corporally. (St. Ephrem also acknowledges elsewhere the bringing of myrrh and gold as returning gifts: "while in Him was hidden a treasure of riches. The myrrh and spices which He had prepared and created, did the Magi bring Him of His own"[96]). This is perhaps the only place in the writings of the Fathers of the Church where milk is given to the Mother of God and in general to someone beyond the age of childhood. The fact verifies that milk has been conceived in time not only as nutrition for the immature but also for other people close to God; children are, and so is Christ's Mother. This assertion will become even more evident in the chapter because the medieval mystics we shall introduce here expanded greatly on the subject of milk consumption for adults. Augustine elaborates on the significance of the connection milk-meat. In Sermon 117a 16, he affirms that in the divine mysteries people pass from milk to solid food. He states (in 15) that when Christ appears "*we shall be like him, since we shall see him as he is* (1 John 3: 2). That is what we are promised." The bishop emphasises that in order for that to be possible, "if we cannot yet see the Word as God, let us listen to the Word as flesh. Because we have become flesh-bound, materialistic, let us listen to the Word who became

[93] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 147a", 16, p. 220.

[94] Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa", p. 19.

[95] Ephrem the Syrian/Morris, "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem. Hymn the third", pp. 23–24. Also in Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 3", in *Hymns*, K. E. McVey (trans.).

[96] Ephrem the Syrian/Morris, "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem. Hymn the third", pp. 23–24. Also in Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 3", in *Hymns*, McVey (trans.).

flesh. The reason he has come, you see, the reason he has taken upon himself our infirmity, is so that you may be able to receive a firm discourse of God, as he bears your infirmity. And it is very properly called milk, because he is giving milk to the little ones, so that he may give them the solid food of wisdom when they are grown up. Take the milk patiently, in order later on to be able to feed on the solid food avidly. I mean, how is even the milk produced on which babies are breastfed? Wasn't there some solid food on the table? But the baby is incapable of eating the solid food on the table. So what does the mother do? She incarnates the food and produces milk from it. She produces for us what we are capable of taking. In the same way the Word became flesh, so that we little ones might be nourished on milk being babies still with respect to solid food."[97] Nevertheless, as noticed, milk is not only about human fragility and immaturity (as implied in 1 Cor. 3: 2 and Heb. 5: 12–14, texts which Augustine was probably evoking) but also about holiness, as hagiography also underscores. It is also about life after death. Paradise itself, as shown, is described as the place where milk and honey abound.

It is interesting to examine the dynamic between Christ who, as abovementioned, is a nursing mother with regard to us and his own mother. Mary herself knew the ultimate source of her milk—as of everything else—and asks her Son rhetorically in yet another hymn: "How shall I open the fountain of milk to Thee, O Fountain? Or how shall I give nourishment to Thee that nourishest all from Thy table?"[98] Cunningham has examined the theme of the *Theotokos* in the context of nourishment and has concluded, in line with previous thinkers, that Mary the Virgin, like her son, came to represent a source of divine nourishment. She indicates a rich literature on the topic of nursing seen as a spiritual act, from which I have included some titles below.[99] A similar interpretation of the act of nursing

[97] Saint Augustine, "Sermon 117a. 15, 16", in *Sermons (94A–147A) on the Old Testament*; The Works of Saint Augustine, electronic edition (third release), v. III/4, pp. 219–220.

[98] Ephrem the Syrian/Morris, "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem. Hymn the fourth", p. 28. Also in Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 4", in *Hymns*, McVey (trans.).

[99] Hugh Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy: the development of the Eucharistic liturgy in the Byzantine rite,* London 1989, esp. 90–101; John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: historical trends and doctrinal themes,* New York 1979, 201–211; Bonifatius Kotter (ed.), "Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos V" (Patristische Texte und Studien 29), *Opera homiletica et hagiographica,* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988, 548 (1), lines 4–7; trans. Brian E. Daley, S.J., *On the Dormition of Mary: early patristic homilies*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998, p. 231; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: men, women, and sexual renunciation in Early Christianity*, London and Boston: Columbia University

with reference to the Virgin is provided by Bolman. During the academic year 2004–2005 she conducted research on the topic of Mary breastfeeding for a project at Dumbarton Oaks. Her online report reveals that the particular work she was presenting has attempted to demonstrate that there is a gap between the biological act of nursing, on the one hand, and the social constructs on that topic, on the other. More on this theme will be incorporated in her forthcoming book *Milk and Salvation*.[100]

Iconography supports the biological-spiritual aspects of breastfeeding and expressly so when holy persons are depicted in this act. With reference specifically to the portraiture of Mary in the occurrence under discussion, in two particular instances—the wall paintings from the cells in the monasteries at Bawit and Saqqara—Bolman believes that they visually encapsulate not only the connection between milk and flesh but also their equivalence with the Eucharist:

> Drawing from Egyptian Christian texts which equate milk with flesh, blood and the eucharist, and which explain that God is the source of the Milk in the Virgin Mary's breasts, the *galaktotrophousa* reads as a metaphor for Christ's flesh and blood and for the consumption of these substances. It is the *logos*, and the Medicine of Immortality. This interpretation of the nursing image is amplified by the physical setting for these wall paintings [in a male environment], and the ritual practices of the Coptic baptismal eucharist.[101]

In Apa Jeremiah Monastery at Saqqara, there are three images reflecting this reality; here many of the tombstones have inscriptions referring to the Mother of God.[102] Bolman insists that, "In a move that seems

Press, 1990, p. 221. Other interesting studies of the relationship between food and medieval spirituality include Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 1987; Bridget Ann Henisch, *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*, University Park P.A.; London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.

[100] Bolman, *Milk and Salvation*; her CV—also online—announces her work as being in progress. This is a development of her doctoral dissertation. See Skalova's "The Icon of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* in the Coptic Monastery of St. Antony the Great at the Red Sea, Egypt: A Preliminary Note", in Krijnie N. Ciggaar and H. Teule (eds.), *East and West in the Crusader States. Context, Contacts, Confrontations III*, Acta of the Congress Held at Hernen Castle in September 2000 (Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta 75), Leuven: Peeters, 2003 (pp. 235–264), p. 240, footnote 20.

[101] Bolman, "The Coptic *Galaktotrophousa* Revisited", p. 17.

[102] Bolman, "The enigmatic *Galaktotrophousa*", in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, p. 17.

counterintuitive to us, most of the Egyptian Christian exempla were designed for the male, monastic viewer, as wall paintings and manuscript illuminations. They read it as a metaphor for the Eucharist."[103] The Coptic Christians, who are miaphysite, do not acknowledge that the one person of Christ, alongside his divine nature, possesses a full and integral human nature. This is in contrast to what the Chalcedonians believe; they hold that in Christ both human and divine natures are united indivisibly in one hypostasis "without mingling, without confusion, and without alteration".[104] Chalcedonian and miaphysite Christians agree about the union of Christ's divinity with his humanity in the historical Jesus, without the two natures being modified or mixed. They disagree about whether, or at least the extent to which, one may rightly distinguish Christ's humanity from his divinity after the Incarnation.

But even Christians who do not completely share in this particular theological dogma have depicted Mary, Anna, and Elisabeth nursing (the latter less frequently) and believed that the breastfeeding act unites the sacred and the divine, the heaven and the earth. Bolman indicates another place where a representation of the Mother of God nursing her child exists; that is Wadi Natrun (also a monastery for men).[105]

But such paintings are to be found not solely among the Coptic Christians or only in Egypt; they can be seen in other places, from Mount Athos to inland Greece and Italy: Vatopedi Monastery, the *Omorphi*

[103] Bolman, Fellowship Report online, Dumbarton Oaks, 2004/2005; retrieved June 2012.

[104] "The [Coptic] Liturgy of Saint Basil of Caesarea" (from its Creed/declaration of faith), www.coptic.net/prayers/StBasilLiturgy.html; retrieved June 2013. This expression does not exist in the "Chalcedonian version" reproduced in "The Liturgy of Saint Basil of Caesarea", *The Lenten Triodion*, trans. Mother Mary and Metrop. Kallistos Ware, South Canaan, P.A.: St. Tikhon Seminary Press, 2002, pp. 548–565 and "The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and The Liturgy of St. Basil of Caesarea", *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church* (compiled, translated, and arranged from the Old Church-Slavonic service books of the Russian Church and collated with the service books of the Greek Church by Isabel Florence Hapgood, revised edition with endorsement by Patriarch Tikhon), sixth edition, Englewood, New Jersey: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, 1983, pp. 67–126.

[105] Bolman, "The enigmatic Galaktotrophousa", in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, plate 1 (colour); repeated (in black and white) in fig. 2.2, p. 21. The caption in Bolman's article reads: "Wadi Natrun, Monastery of the Virgin Mary (so-called Syrian Monastery), Church of the Virgin Mary. *Khurus*, painted column, encaustic. Virgin Mary Galaktotrophousa (source: author; courtesy of Karel Innemée)."

Church in Aegina,[106] Cosenza Cathedral[107]—to provide only the best-known examples. There is a reasonably rich literature and imagery on Mary nursing, a part of which I presented elsewhere[108]; we shall discuss here at length, in Chaps. 5, 6, and 7, the information on St. Anne from this perspective.

Skalova underlines the fact that, in spite of being the women who turned to the Virgin and sometimes even to her icons for help,[109] the Marian renderings, and likewise the homilies,[110] were always painted, respectively conceptualised by men, even the most intimate representations of the Virgin, such as that of *Galaktotrophousa*.[111] The situation is changing today, when women have also taken up icon painting. The above-mentioned researcher points out the connection between liturgical and literary sources focusing on Mary breastfeeding on the one hand and visual representations of the same subject matter on the other. According to Skalova, icons depicting the Mother of God breastfeeding "were inspired by the sixth-century Byzantine *Akathistos* hymn, which hails her in rich metaphors borrowed from the Old Testament. *Agape* for the Virgin Mary also moved Coptic composers of hymns to compose the Theotokia and homilies, which in turn inspired icons [...]. In the icons painted in the Nile Valley during the Middle Ages, the Virgin's images are based on various literary and liturgical sources, early Christian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek, Latin and Syrian in origin, but now translated into Arabic."[112]

[106] Ene D-Vasilescu, "A Case of Power and Subversion?", p. 268.

[107] Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Thoughts on Mary east and west", in Vassilaki, *Images of the Mother of God*, pp. 277–287; Maddona del Pilerio—Maria lactans from Cosenza is reproduced on p. 287 of Weyl Carr's article, fig. 23.1, black and white.

[108] Ene D-Vasilescu, "A Case of Power and Subversion?", pp. 241–272.

[109] Within the substantial bibliography on the miracle-working icons of the Mother of God, the most-known works are by Robin Cormack, "Miraculous icons in Byzantium and their powers", in *Arte Cristiana*, vol. 76/1–2, 1988, 55–60 and D. and T. Talbot-Rice, *Icons and their Dating. A Comprehensive Study of their Chronology and Provenance*, London 1974; on p. 16 the authors relate a powerful story referring to the fifth-century mosaic in the Church of Hosios David in Thessaloniki. I have mentioned some examples of such icons in Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Icons and Iconographers in Romania*, Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2009, pp. 95–96.

[110] An aspect touched on by Averil Cameron in the "Introduction" when she refers to the homily of Proklos, fifth century, and by Niki Tsironis, "From Poetry to Liturgy: The Cult of the Virgin", in Vassilaki (ed.), *Images of the Mother of God*, p. xx, respectively pp. 63–102, especially 92–95.

[111] Zuzana Skalova and Gawdat Gabra, *Icons of the Nile Valley*, Cairo: Longman, 2001, p. 71.

[112] Ibid., p. 72.

Jane Baun reconstructed the rites of passage children underwent in Byzantium and, in addition to naming, baptism, churching, the beginning of primary education, beard cutting, head covering, and betrothal, other "more private and domestic, but potentially as perilous, rites of passage included the first bath, haircut and tooth, and weaning."[113] She considered, with C. Bourbou and S. Garvie-Lok, who established patterns of breastfeeding and weaning in Byzantium, that the latter was a particularly perilous process "given the recommended weaning diet of goat's milk, which lacked vital nutrients, and honey, which could cause botulism poisoning".[114] People in medieval Byzantium developed magico-religious practices to protect and support their children. These were "directed towards ensuing the safety and health for the growing child by protecting it from malign spirits which prey on the vulnerable, and aligning it with heavenly protectors".[115]

Bynum's historical excursus on the topic of sustenance evidences that from the fifth century onwards people apprehended it as having both metaphysical and religious connotations; in fact, as we have seen, people had understood this reality in such terms since St. Paul's times. We have noticed that nutrition—and its converse, fasting, as we shall see—has been a multifaceted, symbolic experience for Christians throughout the centuries. We can end the chapter with one of Pope Leo the Great's seasonal (Christmas) homilies in which he says,

> "We enjoin you to keep this fast of December … because it conforms to piety and justice to render thanks to God after having received the fruits of

[113] Jane Baun, "Coming to Age in Byzantium: Agency and Authority in Rites of Passage from Infancy to Authority in Byzantium", in Pamela Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, p. 114.

[114] Baun, "Coming to Age in Byzantium", footnote 2, page 114, and Chryssi Bourbou and Sandra J. Garvie-Lok, "Breastfeeding and Weaning Patterns in Byzantine Times", in Arietta Papaconstantinou and Alice-Mary Talbot (eds.), *Becoming Byzantine: Children and Childhood in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, 2009, pp. 74–75; Bourbou and S. Garvie-Lok concluded that children were breastfed until they were three years old. In the same volume of interest for our topic are also A. Papaconstantinou, "Homo Byzantinus in the Making" (the Introduction to the volume), pp. 1–1, as well as Günter Prinzing, "Observations on the Legal Status of Children and the Stages of Childhood in Byzantium", pp. 15–3; Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "Le variations du désire d'infant à Byzance", pp. 35–65, and Brigitte Pitarakis, "The Material Culture of Childhood in Byzantium", pp. 167–253, especially 203 ff.

[115] Baun, "Coming to Age in Byzantium", p. 114.

> the earth and to offer him the sacrifice of mercy with the immolation of fasting. Let each one rejoice in the copiousness of the harvest … but in such a way that even the poor rejoice in its abundance. … Let all make account of their riches and let those who have more give more. Let the abstinence of the faithful become the nourishment of the poor and let the indigent receive that which others give up."[116]

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), making a similar point, discussed fasting and abstinence in his *Summa theologiae*; he carefully examined the patristic conception that humankind fell from Paradise through the sin of gluttony.[117] Many ideas and forms of piety and asceticism which the medieval mystics held and practiced were continuations of those peculiar to the Early Church. As previously stated, Augustine thought that believers lived more on faith than on physical nutrition. He also enunciated that in dying, Christ digests and assimilates us, making us new flesh from his flesh.[118] Ideas coming from both threads of his thought circulated extensively in medieval times, when people were almost obsessed with the idea of food in both Eastern and Western Europe. Writers, iconographers, and other artists, as evidenced further, have epitomised this mentality in their works and have explained how the spiritual and material intermingle and what the role of milk and milk-feeding was in this process.

[116] Pope Leo the Great (d. 461), Sermon 20, *Ninth Sermon for the December Fast*, par. 3–3, PL 54, cols. 189–190.

[117] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, ll, llac, q. 148. *De gula*, art. 3, vol. 43, pp. 122–124. For the idea that Adam's sin was gluttony, see Herbert Musurillo, "The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers", *Traditio* 12, 1956, p. 17, footnote 43.

[118] Augustine, *City of God*, book 10, chap. 6, *PL* 41, 284C.

CHAPTER 3

Other Faith Encounters and Instances of Milk Nourishment

3.1 Mystics and Milk

We shall now present testimonies from the mystics and from hagiography that support the understanding of milk as a spiritual food. As announced, nutrition meant many things to medieval Christians. It is important to remember that essential for them were both fasting and participation in the Eucharist; these practices were fundamental ways to praise God and to acknowledge their sinfulness. They received God most personally and intimately in the holy meal in which he became bread and wine and also in milk-suckling or/and offering, as we shall see.

Among others, Hilary of Poitiers (d. 367) and Juliana of Liège/Mont-Cornillon (c. 1193–1258)—to the latter, it is said, we owe the feast of the Corpus Christi—shared in Augustine's conviction regarding the importance of spiritual over material food.[1] Thus, when medieval mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), Mechthild of Magdeburg (c. 1207–c. 1282/1294), Lutgarde of Aywières/Lutgard (1182–1246),[2] Hadewijch

[1] Barbara Newman, *The life of Juliana of Mont-Cornillon*, Peregrina Publications, Toronto, 1999; Miriam Schmitt and Linda Kulzer (eds.), *Medieval Women Monastics*, The Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996, p. 197.

[2] Thomas of Cantimpré (c. 1201–c. 1276), Barbara Newman (ed.), *Thomas of Kempis: The collected saints' lives*, B. Newman (Introduction); trans. Margot H King, Turnhout: Brepols, 2008 *and Vita Lutgardis* (three books), commented on in Miriam Schmitt and Linda Kulzer

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_3

of Antwerp (c. 1200–1240),[3] and Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) referred to being hungry for God or eaten by (and also eating) him, their language echoed words voiced centuries before. Here is, for instance, how St. Anselm addresses Christ when he thinks about the nature of the salvation which was wrought in him: "I faint with hunger for your love; refresh me with it. Let me be filled with your love, rich in your affection, completely held in your care."[4] And he reminisces and elaborates further: "Once man did eat angels' food/and now he hungers for it; now he eats the bread of sorrow, which then he knew nothing of."[5] In his "Prayer to Christ", Anselm implores: "My Lord and my Creator,/You bear with me and nourish me—/Be my helper./I thirst for you, I hunger for you, I desire you, I sigh for you, I covet you".[6]

The most-known British male mystic of the Middle Ages, Richard Rolle of Hampole (1290?–1349), also thought of Christ as nurture taken with joy and understood the best (spiritual) sustenance to be love. The poem "A Song of Love-longing to Jesus" expresses some of these: "I sytt and syng of lufe-langyng, ƀat in my hert es bred/Jhesu, my keyng and my

(eds.), *Medieval Women Monastics*, Wisdom's Wellsprings, Princeton, New Jersey: Liturgical Press, 1996, pp. 198–200.

[3] Columba Hart (trans. and introd.), *Hadewijch. The complete works*, Preface by Paul Mommaers, The Classics of Western Spirituality, edited by Richard J. Payne, Mahwah, N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1980. After Hadewijch writings were rediscovered in 1838 by medievalists who began to study the collection of manuscripts from the Royal Library of Brussels, the first modern critical editions of her works were published by Jozef Van Mierlo between 1924 and 1952. Since then, translations of her poetry and prose have appeared in English, German, French, and Italian, as well as modern Dutch. See also C. Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century", *Women's Studies*, ll, 1984, pp. 179–214, esp. 10, 191–192.

[4] St. Anselm, "Meditation on Human Redemption", in Benedicta Ward (ed. and trans.), *Saint Anselm. Prayers and Meditations*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 237. See also St. Anselm, *Anselmi Opera Omnia*, edited by F. S. Smith, vols. 1–6, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1938–1968; *Theological Treatises*, Hopkins and H. Richardson (eds. and transl.), London: SCM Press and Toronto and New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1974–1976, vols. 1–4; *The Cur Deus Homo* and the *De Conceptu Virginali*, J. M. Colleran (trans.), Albany, New York, 1969, and *Proslogion*, trans. M. Charlesworth, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965; reprinted 1979, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press; this is also included in St. Anselm, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion*, trans. and with an Introduction by Sister Benedicta Ward, with a Foreword by R. W. Southern, London et al.: Penguin, 1973 (Benedicta Ward comments on this text in her "Introduction", pp. 77–81).

[5] Anselm, "Proslogion", in *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 241.

[6] Anselm, "Prayer to Christ", in *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 94.

joyng, why ne war I to be led?/Ful wele I wate in all my state, in joy I sulde be fed./Jhesu, me btyng til ƅi wonying, for blode ƅat ƅou hase sched./Demed he was to hyng ƅy faire aungels fode/Ful sare ƿai gan hymn swyng when ƿat he bunden stode."[7] In the poems "Salutation to Jesus" and "The Nature of Love", he affirmed that people can be fed and protected by love.[8] Rolle's best-known work, *Incendium Amoris/The Fire of Love*,[9] which described the four purgative stages that one had to undergo in order to come closer to God, provides an account of his mystical experiences. He describes it as being of three kinds: a sense of sweetness, physical warmth in his body, and a heavenly music that accompanies him when he chants the Psalms; the vision of an open door precedes them. In stanza 29 from the poem "Jhesu, thy sweetness …", Rolle also speaks with the Lord in these terms: "Jhesu, thy sweetness shield me from the fiend".[10] His poems were widely read in medieval times.

In anticipation of and preparation for the next two chapters—on St. Anne and milk nourishment—it would be useful to answer the question as

[7] Richard Rolle, "A Song of Love-longing to Jesus", in Emily Allen Hope (ed.), *English Writings of Richard Rolle*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931, p. 42. "I sit and sing of love-longing which in my breast has bred/Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, why aren't I to you led?/You contemplate my present state; in love my mind established./When I you see, and you're with me, then I am quite full-fed./Jesu, your love's fixed fast: love seems to me the best./My heart, when could it burst, to come to you, my rest?/Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, for you it is I yearn/And so, my life and loving, when may I to you turn?/ Jesu, my dear and my bounty, delight are you to sing./Jesu, my mirth and melody, when will you come, my king?/Jesu, my help and my honey, my health, my comforting,/Jesu, I desire to die when it's to you pleasing"; translation (and ed.), Rosamund S. Allen in *Richard Rolle: The English Writings*, Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1988, p. 141. For more on his life and other writings, see Frances M. M. Comper, *The Life of Richard Rolle. Together with an Edition of his English Lyrics*, New York: Barnes and Noble, 1928; London: Methuen & Co, 1929 (this contains an English translation of the Office for Rolle on pp. 301–311). The original Latin text of the Office is in Reginald M. Wooley, *The Officium et Miracula of Richard Rolle of Hampole*, London: SPCK, 1919. See also Dom Jean Mabillon, O.S.B. (ed.), *Life and Works of St. Bernard*, trans. S. L. Eales, London: Burns & Oates: New York: Benziger, 1889–1896, vols. 1–4 (vols. 1. and 2 contain Letters; vol. 3, Letters and Sermons, and vol. 4, Sermons on the Song of Songs).

[8] Rolle, "A Song of Love-longing to Jesus", in *English Writings of Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole*, edited by Hope Emily Allen, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931 (reprinted 1963), pp. 48–49, respectively, pp. 49–51.

[9] Richard Rolle, *Incendium Amoris* (*The Fire of Love*), trans. Clifton Wolters, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.

[10] Rolle, "Jhesu, thy sweetness …", in F. M. M. Comper, *The Life of Richard Rolle*, p. 292.

to what extent Bynum's assertion "Woman is food"[11] is true in the respective period. The scholar believes that medieval piety was expressed, especially by women, through a particular attitude towards nutrition (she even speaks about "food behaviour"). She offers an answer to this question herself when, in her book *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, she evokes the existence of "new opportunities for women" in that historical period. Bynum explains the relationships of medieval women between themselves and their food and also their religious beliefs, by advancing that "Food is important to women religiously because it is important socially".[12] And that was reflected in the religious and artistic creations of the time. The great Eucharistic hymn once attributed to Innocent IV (d. 1254), the *Ave verum corpus*, echoes such imagery: "Hail true body born of Mary the Virgin, that truly suffered and was offered as sacrifice on the cross for humankind, and from whose pierced side poured forth real blood. Be to us in the extremity of death a foretaste [of heaven]."[13] Here again, as in Late Antiquity, one sees the connection between spiritual and maternal nourishment and blood, as well as the similarity between the food metaphors employed by the late medieval chants and those in the works of the Patristic theologians and poets. For example, the hymn used for Monday Lauds and attributed to Ambrose (d. 397) reads: "Let Christ be our food and faith our drink; let us happily drink the sober inebriation of the spirit."[14]

Elaborating further on the significance of food as an underlying theme in women's medieval spirituality, it should be emphasised that in order to grasp it one needs to comprehend the general changes in their religious experience throughout the period. With particular reference to the interval of time Chap. 7 of this book focuses on, Bynum considers that "The latter Middle Ages, especially the period from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century, witnessed a significant proliferation of opportunities for women to participate in specialized religious roles and of the type of

[11] C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics), Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987, p. 189.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Innocent lV, *Ave verum corpus*, in Clemens Blume (ed.), *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, vol. 54, Reisland, Leipzig, 1915, p. 257, trans. and adapted from Joseph Connelly, *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy*, Westminster Md.: Newman Press, 1957, p. 130.

[14] Ambrose, "Hymn 3: Splendor paternae gloriae", in A. S. Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns*, Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 38.

roles available." The number of female saints, including married women, increased and the cult of some traditional universal ones was augmented. Women's piety—whether monastic or lay—took on certain distinctive characteristics which powerful males, both secular and clerical, noted with admiration sometimes.[15] That was reflected in the actions of some male patrons, usually people in power, to dedicate new churches, icons, or works of religious art in general to the Mother of God and to women saints (as well as to men). The period from 1100 to 1400 saw the creation of new types of religious life for women—a clear indication of their growing prominence both in reflecting and in creating piety,[16] often in connection to milk. In the Middle Ages, for the first time in Christian history, a women's movement—that of the Beguines—is recorded; and one can speak of specifically female influences on the development of devotion.[17]

Medieval women not only were socially involved in creating communities—as the Beguines were—sponsoring charities, buildings (usually churches), the arts, and people but also breastfed (at least some of them) and had visions regarding milk. Miraculous occurrences of lactation were frequently reported in the Middle Ages and, interestingly, they involved both women and men. Speaking particularly of milk's use and consumption in various forms, the male mystic Bernard of Clairvaux, who received it in a vision from the Virgin Mary as a remedy, needs to be mentioned. Her statue allowed the nutritious liquid to flow from her breast to heal the saint's afflicted eyes.[18] In other variants of the account concerning this experience, it is said that St. Bernard knelt down in front of a statue of Mary with the child Jesus and asked her, "Show yourself to be a mother!". Afterwards, while he was in prayer or in a dream Mary responded by pressing her breast and nourishing him with her milk. The story went across Europe and was iconographically represented in various periods, especially in Spain and Belgium. In the former country that happened as early as 1290 through the hands of the Master of La Palma, his painting is today in the care of the Sociedad Arqueológica Luliana, Palma de Mallorca. There are more versions of that image in Spain, for instance one from

[15] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 13–14.

[16] Idem, p. 20.

[17] Idem, pp. 13–14.

[18] In Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* there are two reproductions of this scene: Plate 18, Lactation of St. Bernard by the Master of Palma, and Plate 19, Lactation of St. Bernard by Master of Osma; both images are black and white.

1460 made by the Master of Osma, Soria (Burgos province), now kept by El Burgo de Osma, and one from c. 1650 by Alonso Cano,now in the Museum of Prado, Madrid (Fig. 3.1) where two other images exist; few other works are in various museum and galleries across Spain.

Also the miracle performed to Bernard was rendered in various forms (sometimes with the breast near the saint's lips), for instance in a painting by Simon Marmion, about 1475–1480, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and with a simple Virgin and child image on a cloud—a kind of mandorla—in the sixteenth-century work by Juan Correa de Vivar hosted by the Prado Museum. In 1480 the Flemish school created their own version of Bernard's vision that is presently displayed in the Musée d'Art Religieux d'Art Mosan, Liège.

Fig. 3.1 The miraculous lactation of St. Bernard de Clairvaux, The Vision of St Bernard), Alonso Cano, c. 1650, Museo del Prado/Prado Museum, Madrid (Image sourced in https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alonso_Cano_-_The_Vision_of_St_Bernard_-_WGA4005.jpg)



Building on narratives about the experience undergone by the Cistercian, Walker Bynum comments that for this mystic, "the maternal image is almost without exception elaborated [...] as a nurturing, particularly suckling [one]". She expounds on this and on his *Epistola* 144 in which he expresses affection for his spiritual sons in his abbey.[19] She goes into the details of to whom Bernard ascribes maternal characteristics—to heads of religious communities and particularly to himself since he is one of them: "Breasts, to Bernard, are a symbol of the pouring out towards others of affectivity or of instruction and almost invariably suggest to him a discussion of the duties of prelates or abbots. Bernard not only develops an elaborate picture of the abbot (he usually has himself in mind) as mother; he also frequently attributes maternal characteristics, especially suckling with milk, to the abbot when he refers to him as father."[20] In this case—as in others in which holy women are presented in a context involving lactation, often in situations of maternal milk-feeding—the respective act is mostly affirmed as being beneficial for both the soul and the body. The medieval mystic Lukardis of Oberweimar had a vision of Mary nursing the child Christ; she also received the breast after requesting it. She drank its milk and felt "great delight beyond human sweetness".[21] Lidwina of Schiedam (d. 1433), who acquired milk in her breasts without giving birth, "even nursed others, in an act that she herself explicitly saw as analogous to the virgin nursing of Christ".[22] In his biography, James (Jacques) of Vitry (c. 1160/70–1240) narrates that the Beguine Mary of Oignies (1177–1213; born in Nivelles, now Belgium) asserted that she saw milk (not oil, as would have been expected from the most famous universal Myrobolite) flowing from the relics on an altar dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra in the Priory of Saint-Nicolas d'Oignies in the Diocese of Liège,

[19] Bernard of Clairvaux, "Letter 144", in "Epistolae", vol. 1 (1–180), *Santi Bernardi opera* [*OB*], vol. 7, eds. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, Editiones Cistercienses, Rome, (1974), pp. 344–346.

[20] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984, first edition 1982, pp. 115–116.

[21] "Life of Lukardis Oberweimar", in *Analecta Bollandiana* 18, Société de Bollandistes, 1899, pp. 318–319.

[22] "Life of Benevenuta of Bojano", in J. Carnandet et al. (eds.), *AASS* (*Acta Sanctorum*), the new edition, Paris: V. Palmé, vol. 2, chap. 1, par. 5; Johannes Brugman, *Vita Lijdwine/Life of Lidwina*, Museum of the Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, 1498 and Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, p. 126.

where James was a canon until 1216, when he was consecrated as bishop.[23] Another (later) Beguine and stigmatic, Gertrude van der Oosten (born at Voorburg, Holland; d. 6 January 1358) found that her breast became filled with milk when she meditated on the Nativity; she showed a special devotion to the child Christ.[24] There are many other cases of mystics, both men and women, receiving milk either produced by their own bodies (through God's grace) or by being fed on it. With regard specifically to views on milk-nursing in the Middle Ages, Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff indicates that Italian women saints in their visions are nursed by Christ, rather than by Mary.[25] We should observe that, in other places in Europe, especially in the North, the milk comes from both Christ and his mother. In Bynum's opinion, *Hadewijch of Brabant*'s emphasis on spirituality and the expressions she employed might have been influenced by the Cathars,[26] who were related to the Bogomils of Bulgaria and Thrace; this fact is significant for the book, as will become evident in Chap. 8. Perhaps the scholar is right in this particular case, but generally speaking, as we shall see further, for example, in the instances of martyrs described in the context of their bodies issuing milk in various situations other than maternal, this theme, like that of breastfeeding and more broadly motherhood, was almost invariably anti-dualist.

3.2 Martyrs and Milk

Evidence from martyrology supports the understanding of milk as spiritual nurture to the human physical body. The *Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas* (early third century?) relates that Perpetua had a

[23] Jacques de Vitry, *Vita Maria Oigniacensi in Naurcensis Belgii diocecesi per Jacobum de Vitriaco* [*The biography of Mary of Oignies*], in Daniel Papebroec (ed.), *AASS,* trans. M. H. King and H. Feiss, Paris, June 1867, pp. 542–572.

[24] David Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 120.

[25] Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Consolation of the Blessed: Women Saints in Medieval Tuscany*, New York: Alta Gaia, 1980; p. 74. See also her book, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism,* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

[26] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 124–126. See also, among numerous book dedicated to Hadewijch, as for instance, Columba Hart (ed. trans. and preface by P. Mommaers), *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*, New York: Paulist Press, 1980; and Bernard McGinn (ed.), *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics: Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete*, New York: Continuum, 1994.

vision of heaven and of herself within it after her death—an Ancient of Days figure is dispensing milk to her.[27] There are also cases of saints who, when killed, had milk coming out of their wounds instead of blood. One of several accounts of the deaths of Sts. Paul and Catherine testifies that "milk gushed forth in place of blood from their decapitated remains".[28] St. Paul's end is narrated in his apocryphal "Acts": "Then Paul stood with his face to the east, and lifting up his hands to heaven prayed at length; and after communing in prayer in Hebrew with the fathers he stretched out his neck without speaking further. But when the executioner struck off his head, *milk spurted* upon the soldier's clothing. And when they saw it, the soldier and all who stood were amazed and glorified God who had given Paul such glory. And they went off and reported to Caesar what had happened."[29] In *Passio S. Katerine*, the scene of the saint's martyrdom is described as: "mid te dunc, *milc imenget* wið blod, to beoren hire witnesse of hire white meiđ had".[30] These manifestations occurred because, not only were the saints fed with the Divine Logos—the milk made in heaven—but, as shown, they in turn acted as "nurses" for the people who entreated them. In doing so, they emulated Christ, his Mother, and also St. Paul (we have seen that in 1 Thess. 2.7 he explicitly said to the inhabitants of Salonica/Thessaloniki that he is like a nurse for them). The flow of milk coming from an open wound when someone dies, as was the case with Sts. Paul and Catherine, attests to "instantaneous salvation and attainment of immortality in Christ"; milk is also "the reward of the just at the Last Judgment"[31]; as we have just noted, God is bestowing it.

[27] Great Synaxaristes, *Ἡ Ἁγία Περπέτουα ἡ Μάρτυς καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῇ*, Buena Vista, Colorado: Holy Apostles Convent and Dormition Skete, February volume, first of February, pp. 24–38; Herbert Musurillo (ed. and trans.), "Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis/Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and St Felicitas", in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, special edition 2000, pp. 106–131.

[28] Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa", p. 18.

[29] "Acts of Paul (*c.* AD 185–195)", in W. Schneemelcher and R. Kasser (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992, vol. 2, pp. 262–263; emphasis added.

[30] Simonne R. T. O. d'Ardenne and Eric J. Dobson (eds.), *Passio S. Katerine* "vulgate" version, EETS s.s. [from the edited text (based on MS Bodley 34) and Titus MS], Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981 [pp. 132–203], verse 900, p. 128; emphasis added. See also René Coursault, *Sainte Catherine d'Alexandrie: le mythe et la tradition*, Paris, 1984, 14, 42, 50, 121 and John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Katherine,* Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute, 1999.

[31] Bolman, "The enigmatic Coptic Galaktotrophousa", p. 18.

Even after the moment of bodily death, physical sustenance still has a role to play, and that was made manifest early in Christianity by the celebration of the Eucharist at the graves of martyrs. As known, the veneration of the saints was initially the cult of the martyrs; its origins can be traced back at least to the second century, as the *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp* shows.[32] The mortal remains of the martyr were buried, if at all possible, and yearly commemorations, involving remembrance through the Eucharist, were made at the place of burial. Sometimes meals were also shared there; that practice continues today in the form of people distributing *kol(i)va*[33] or other food on behalf of departed members of their family. That happens in the church, at home, or/and in the cemetery.

As a conclusion to the chapter, one can say that in regard to mystics, martyrs, and saints, milk was seen as important; it was conceived as pertaining to biological as well as sacred domains. Medieval people and mystics felt it necessary to position themselves strongly vis-à-vis physical sustenance and particularly milk in a positive way; even fasting was seen as a preparation for a feast, either on earth or in heaven, or both.

[32] Andrew Louth, "Hagiography", in Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, Andrew Louth (eds.), assisted by Augustine Casiday, *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; pp. 358–361.

[33] *Kol(i)va* consists in boiled wheat with spices added.

CHAPTER 4

Anne's Veneration as a Part of the Cult of the Saints

In order to comprehend why St. Anne was (and is still) very popular today, we have to understand her veneration as a part of the larger phenomenon that the cult of the saints constitutes. According to Peter Brown, following the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, this was the dominant form of religion in Christian Europe. It goes without saying that what he stated regards the popular experience of religion because otherwise, as is known, liturgical celebration and doctrinal elaboration have always been central to both Eastern and Western Christendom. Innumerable books approach the rise of the cult of saints from various perspectives.[1] Among their authors, Wendy Mayer thinks that it came into prominence in the fourth century and that its first elements were present at least as early as the third (for instance, through the practice of celebrating an Eucharistic meal at the grave of a martyr and that of seeking burial next to one).[2] Her view concurs with that expressed by Averil Cameron, who believes that the period of the fourth and fifth centuries was "the age of the holy man and the

[1] Among those and the books quoted in this volume, that by Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012 is also to be mentioned.

[2] St. John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints*, Selected homilies and letters introduced, translated, and annotated by Wendy Mayer with Bronwen Neil, Crestwood, NY, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006, p. 11.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_4

ascetic".[3] The latter statement does not contradict Mayer's point regarding the existence of earlier notions connected with this phenomenon, because here Cameron refers to the peak of the cult's development in Late Antiquity. With respect to the geographical area where the veneration of the saints emerged, Cameron avers that it happened around the Mediterranean and simultaneously in different places. The chapter will make evident through examples how its dissemination advanced after the fifth century and how it reached Northern Europe from its southern sea, focusing on St. Anne's popular acceptance.

Brown disputes the common apprehending of the cult of the saints as an outbreak of superstition among the lower classes and demonstrates how it appealed to and occasioned from educated people impressive achievements in literature, music, and the patronage of the arts.[4] He also explores the role of shrines, tombs, and pilgrimages connected with the relics of the saints and reveals how people living in harsh and sometimes cruel times relied upon their intercession to obtain forgiveness, to find new ways to accept others, and have fulfilling lives. The richest erected churches and dedicated mosaics, frescoes, and icons to the saints they trusted to help them in achieving their wishes and, as we shall see further, many times their requests were answered. The saints were conceived of as interceding for people with God, protecting them, and performing miracles on their behalf because they have been granted the "freedom of speech" (*parrhesia*) in front of the Creator. Saints and holy people were called upon, among other things, "to offer up efficacious prayers (much more likely to be heard than those of his [or her] petitioners, because of his [her] standing in the court of heaven)".[5]

Perhaps at this point we can elaborate on the issue of relics and on their capacity to perform miracles because happenings concerning this aspect aided in the diffusion of saints' popularity. This is because, as we shall see, St. Anne's remains (bones as well as objects which were associated with her) played a major role in the spreading of her cult—significantly for our

[3] Averil Cameron, *Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity: AD 395–700*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 71.

[4] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its rise and function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

[5] James D. Howard-Johnston, "Introduction", in J. Howard-Johnston and P. Anthony Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, reprinted 2014, p. 3.

book, there exists a relic of her breast.[6] It seemed that the matter of relics' veridicity has never been a concern in her case, which is a wonder given the fact that Anne is the earliest venerated saint (with Joachim, who left no relics so far as I am aware). The evolution of the belief that a saint can perform miracles posthumously and the practices around it in early Christianity are described by Andrew Louth along these lines: when it became feasible, a small chapel, a *martyrium*, was built, with the altar placed over the early remains of a holy person. As the cult of the saints developed, it became a common practice for some portion of the relics of one or more saints to be placed beneath every Christian altar, a practice made obligatory at the Seventh Oecumenical Council (through canon 7).[7] This issue was controversial, as we can see from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (*of the Miracle of the Italian Fathers*), for instance,[8] discussed at length by, among others, Matthew Dal Santo[9] and detailed in some of the

[6] Dana Stehlíková, *The Holy Breast of St Anne, relics and reliquaries in mediaeval Prague: The Pleasure of touching*, paper presented at the twentieth International Congress of Mediaeval Studies in Leeds, July 2013.

[7] Louth, "Hagiography", pp. 358–361.

[8] Grégoire le Grand/A. de Vogüé (ed.), "Dialogues de Grégoire le Grand", trans. P. Antin, vols. 1–3, SC, 251, 260, 265, Paris: Cerf, 1978–1980; the critical edition. See also Odo John Zimmerman, *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues,* The Fathers of the Church vol. 39, Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959; see also Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. J. Birrell, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, reprinted 2007; on p. 95 it is written that Constantine Porphyrogenitus kissed the altar cloth within the sanctuary, and on p. 101 that on another occasion, the same emperor was "presented with the liturgical vessels and relics" and was again given "the cloth to kiss". We can see that the relics were not only under the altar but also on the table where the sacraments are kept; also there is a point in the history of the Byzantine Church when relics where sewn into the *antemison*, a cloth kept on the altar, kissed by the priests at the beginning of the Liturgy, and when the necessity arose for such services to be held outside the building of a church, spread by the priests on any table, which could in this way fulfil the function of an altar. The practice has been kept in the Orthodox Church. More on the issue of relics may be found in: *The Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla*, Société des Bollandistes, Brussels, 1978 and Marie-France Auzépy, "Les Isauriens et l'espace sacre: l'eglise et les reliques"; in M. Kaplan (ed.), *Le sacré et son inscriptions dans l'espace à Byzance et en occident*, University of Sorbonne, Paris, 2001, 13–24, reprinted in M-F., *L'histoire des iconoclastes*, Paris: ACHC Byz-Association des Amis du Centre d'Histoire et Civilization de Byzance, 2007, pp. 341–352. For competition between rationalist and miraculous aetiologies in the Byzantine period, see John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

[9] Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

articles in the volume *Age of the Saints. Power and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*.[10] During the fifth and sixth centuries also the practice of pilgrimage took root since the cult of the saints was well established in the Byzantine Empire that resulted in the local Mediterranean saints becoming more and more transnational. All these developments made John Chrysostom write homilies and letters on saints wherever his eventful life took him, from Antioch to Armenia. He composed these about the lives and miracles of Sts. Meletius, Eustathius, Lucian, Phocas, Juventinus, Maximinus, Ignatius, Bernike, Prosdoke, Domnina, Barlaam, Drosis, Eleazar, and the seven boys, among others.[11] Pope Gregory (c. 540–604), in his four above-mentioned dialogues, refers to a multitude of holy men, among them Cosmas and Damianos, Benedict of Nursia, and also to bishops, priests, and monks within living memory (the text was written between the summer of 593 and the autumn of 594[12]); some of them were later forgotten liturgically. Dal Santo cautions that one should see this "most controversial work" of the pope from the perspective of a wide-ranging debate about saints which took place in early Byzantine society. Like other contemporary writings in Greek and Syriac, Gregory's text debated the nature and plausibility of the miracles performed by the saints both when they were alive and posthumously, as well as the characteristics of the cult of the saints. Such a discussion was necessary since many of his contemporaries questioned and challenged the claims of hagiographers and other promoters. Hence, as Matthew Dal Santo indicates, in the Byzantine world from Italy to the heart of the Persian Empire at Ctesiphon, scepticism and rationalism were manifest in parallel with religious

[10] Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo, and Phil Booth (eds.), *Age of the Saints. Power and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011.

[11] St. John Chrysostom, *The Cult of the Saints*, Selected homilies and letters introduced, translated, and annotated by Wendy Mayer with Bronwen Neil, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006.

[12] Baudoin/Baudouin de Gaiffier d'Hestroy, "L'hagiographie et son public au XIe siècle", in *Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen*, Brussel: Éditions universitaires, 1947, [vols. 1–2],vol. 1, pp. 135–166, reprinted in *Études critiques d'hagiographie et d'iconologie*, Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica, 43), 1967, pp. 475–507; "Une collaboration fraternelle: La dissertation sur S. Ignace par les pères Jean et Ignace Pinius in 1675", *Acta sanctorum*, Institutum historicum S. I., Rome, 1956; "A propos des légendiers latins," *Analecta Bollandiana* 97, 1979, pp. 57–68; "Études critiques d'hagiographie et d'iconologie", *Subsidia hagiographica* 43, Brussels, 1967; Baudouin de Gaiffier, "Les thèmes hagiographiques. Est-il possible d'établir pour chacun d'eux une filiation?", *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 77, 1982, pp. 78–81.

convictions and piety. The patronage of shrines dedicated to saints "to sanction imperial autocracy […] co-existed with doubt towards the saints, which sometimes was an expression of political opposition in the late East Roman or Byzantine Empire".[13]

Generally speaking, the rise and circulation of the cults of saints was not a uniform process: in some cases, it occurred very early, as already indicated; Chrysostom's discourses provided one of the proofs. It is true that "the public standing of the saints' had been consolidated" after 700, as Dal Santo affirms, and this is the case with St. Anne.

Complementing the mentioned seminal work of Brown on which some of the more recent authors have drawn, new pieces on European saints have been published, and they bring novelty especially concerning medieval saints.[14] Antony Eastmond writes with particular reference to Orthodox countries (those which constituted the Byzantine Empire or were under Byzantine influence) and demonstrates that in the Middle Ages their religious life was marked by an increased number of saints; he believes that the fourth crusade was responsible for such a happening. The phenomenon is evident through the fact that more vitae of the holy people, including women, were written—it became a literary genre—and iconography began portraying them soon after their recognition by the Church. Eastmond affirms that, while extensive renderings of saints' lives "are relatively rare in Orthodox art" (he identifies only ten such images painted in the 350 years between the end of iconoclasm and the fall of

[13] Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, Oxford University Press, 2012. On the same topic, see Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo, and Phil Booth (eds.), *Age of the Saints. Power*, *Conflict*, *and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2011. On the alternation between belief and scepticism in respect to saints in Byzantium, see John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, revised edition.

[14] Matthew Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult in the Age of Gregory the Great*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. On the same topic, see Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo, and Phil Booth (eds.), *Age of the Saints Age of the Saints. Power, Conflict, and Dissent in Early Medieval Christianity*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011 draw explicitly and have Brown's ideas as a background. Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov, *Saints and their lives on the periphery. Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2010; Ildar H. Garipzanov, "The cult of St. Nicholas in the Early Christian in the Early Christian North (c. 1000–1150)", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2010, pp. 229–246. I have edited myself a book containing the papers about St. Anne presented at the Congress of Medieval Studies in Leeds in 2013, see Elena Ene D-Vasilescu (ed.), *Devotion to St. Anne in Texts and Images. Byzantium to the Middle Ages*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Constantinople) "[y]et in the space of 30 years after 1204, new monumental narratives of four different saints' lives appear. Three of these *are devoted to specifically local saints* […]; the fourth *is linked to one of these*."[15] The three main pictorial cycles appear in diverse contexts in churches on the eastern and western fringes of the Byzantine world, in the Balkans—the researcher reveals some from Serbia—and the Caucasus. He claims that such a process of artistic innovation took place everywhere on the fringes of the empire. Therefore, one might say that the fourth crusade played a role in the occurrence and the spreading of not only the cult of the saints in the Balkans—St. Anne among them—but also in the iconography depicting them (and implicitly the nursing scenes in which Anne is represented). The Latin conquest of Constantinople had repercussions on the political, religious, social, and cultural structures of the states Eastmond mentions. The Orthodox world underwent a radical change in that period, which altered the political and conceptual map of the eastern Mediterranean, and the appearance of new saints and iconographic ensembles—for instance the cycle of Mary's infancy—is connected with these broader political changes.

The most documented situation from this point of view is that referring to the cult of St. Nicholas, who has received recent attention. An article about the bishop of Myra by Ildar H. Garipzanov tells the story of his and of some local saints' veneration in Northern Europe [a geographical space where Christianity was still novel as a religion when this cult appeared].[16] To show the similarity between the cults of Sts. Anne and Nicholas, and to fill some gaps in the information with regard to that of Anne (in places, of the same nature), we summarise the circulation of the Myrobolite's cult. It originates to the early sixth-century Byzantium; a church from that time in the town of Myra (now called Kale-Demre) still survives. Already in 880 Emperor Basil I founded the Nea Church Constantinople, a palatine building partly dedicated to this saint. The popularity of the bishop grew to encompass the territories with a Latin rite and he became known in Rome; the first pope bearing his name, Nicholas I (800–867), is an obvious testimony to this phenomenon. In the same period, St. Nicholas was already mentioned in several Carolingian documents. Scholars disagree on the manner the cult was transmitted after the year 1000, but it is not

[15] Antony Eastmond, "'Local' Saints, Art, and Regional Identity in the Orthodox World after the Fourth Crusade", *Speculum*, vol. 78, No. 3 (2003), p. 707.

[16] I. H. Garipzanov, "The cult of St. Nicholas", pp. 229–246.

important which account of the transmission one favours. Two have been circulated: one established by Karl Meisen, which says that, after its occurrence in Byzantium, St. Nicholas's veneration made its way to southern Italy; by the ninth century it was known in Rome and the Carolingian realm, and a century later by the Ottonian Germans.[17] Then, the foundation of the Norman state in southern Italy made this cult popular in Normandy in the first half of the eleventh century, and its inhabitants took it with them to England and Scandinavia. The other theory with respect to St. Nicholas's increase in popularity, which in fact does not contradict the first if the chronology is properly considered, was suggested by Charles Jones. He believes that the cathedral culture of Lower Lotharingia was directly influenced by Byzantium and that attracted also the development in reverence towards this saint. Then, in the second quarter of the eleventh century, it was transmitted to Normandy and the rest of France and to England. I believe that both these versions can be valid in the case of St. Anne; we just do not have material evidence to prove that this is the case. On another track, according to Garipzanov, St. Nicholas's cult spread quickly from Southern Europe in the first half of the twelfth century to Novgorod and Northern Europe, a state of affairs facilitated to a great extent by the relocation of his earthly remains from Myra to Bari (in 1087) by the Normans of Southern Italy.[18] Two years after this event, a Catholic

[17] Karl Meisen, *Nikolauskult und Nikolausbrauch*, Schwann, Düsseldorf, 1931, reprinted 1981; Garipzanov speaks about Maisen's theory in Garipzanov, "Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints in the eleventh-century Rus': a comparative view", in Antonsson and Garipzanov, *Saints and their lives on the periphery*, pp. 137–138. In order to elaborate on it, he uses as sources (in his footnote 115, p. 142) Andrzej Buko, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Poland: Discoveries-Hypothesis-Interpretations*, East-Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, n.s., 1, Leiden: Brill, 2008, pp. 213 and 253–254; and Henryk Paner, "The Spatial Development of Gdansk to the beginning of the 14th century: The Origins of the Old and the Main Town", in Urbanczyk, *Polish Lands at the Turn of the First and the Second Millennia*, pp. 23–27 [pp. 15–32].

[18] Garipzanov, "The cult of St. Nicholas", p. 230; Werner Mezger, *Sankt Nikolaus*, Ostfildern: Zw. Kult u. Klamauk, 1993. When Myra (in today's Turkey) passed into the hands of the Saracens, some saw it as an opportunity to move the saint's relics to a more hospitable location. According to the justifying legend, the saint, passing by the city on his way to Rome, had chosen Bari as his burial place. There was great competition for the relics between Venice and Bari. When the latter won, the relics were taken by cart in under the eyes of the lawful Greek custodians and their Muslim masters, and on 9 May 1087 they landed at Bari. A new church was built to shelter Nicholas's remains and Pope Urban II was present at the consecration of the crypt in 1089. The edifice was officially consecrated in 1197, in the presence of the Imperial Vicar, Bishop Conrad of Hildesheim. Elias, abbot of the nearby

feast was dedicated to the saint. The Kievan calendar adopted him sometimes in the period 1089–1093, and during the twelfth century the Myrobolite's popularity increased significantly. This is also when people began designating him as patron of churches and abbeys in England, Denmark, territories along the Baltic Sea, Norway (in Oslo, St. Nicholas Church was built next to the royal palace[19]), and Cologne; the latter became a centre for the dissemination of his veneration in Lower Lotharingia.

According to Garipzanov, the manuscript tradition of the Anglo-Saxon litanies of saints, in which St. Nicholas was first included in the mid-eleventh century, seems to corroborate that the cult arrived in England from the middle Rhine region rather than Normandy.[20] The bishop from Myra is listed in two manuscripts from Corpus Christi College in Cambridge written at that time, mss. 163 and 391. The names of the local saints mentioned in Ms. 163 link it directly to Cologne. The second codex, Ms. 391, is of Worcester provenance. Another manuscript produced for the cathedral of the latter town, in c. 1060 (British Museum, Ms. Cotton Nero E. 1), contains the Office of St. Nicholas. Jones has pointed to Bishop Wulfstan as the main promoter of the cult in Anglo-Saxon England.[21] Garipzanov seems to be on the side of the second of the two views expressed above with respect to the dissemination of the cult of St. Nicholas. Whatever one believes about the initial movement, it is certain that Normans had a role in spreading the cult of St. Nicholas within Europe, as it is likely that they had in the dissemination of that of St. Anne.

The veneration of St. Nicholas (and also of Mary's mother, as we shall see) was facilitated by the commercial relations between Southern and

monastery of St. Benedict, was named as first archbishop. For information on other saints from the same part of Europe, see Antonsson and Garipzanov, *Saints and their lives on the periphery* and H. Antonsson, "Saints and Relics in Early Christian Scandinavia", in *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 15 (2005), pp. 51–80.

[19] Haakon Christie, "Old Oslo", *Medieval Archaeology*, 10 (1966), pp. 45–58 (pp. 48–50), and Lorentz Dietrichson, *Sammenlignede Fortegnelse over Norges Kirkebygninger I Middelalderen og Nutiden*, Kristiania: Malling, 1888, p. 6.

[20] Garipzanov, "Novgorod and the Veneration of Saints in the eleventh-century Rus", p. 138. MSS 163 and 391 from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; the section dedicated to the twelfth century contains litanies in which St. Nicholas is mentioned. See Michael Lapidge (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991.

[21] Charles W. Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Northern Europe. Garipzanov points out that "Trading contacts via the Baltic Sea were also important. It is not coincidental that in the same period or slightly later Nicholas became the favoured patron saint of early churches founded in newly Christianized Pomerania—that is, along the southern coast of the Baltic Sea on the way from Northern Germany and Denmark to Novgorod—for instance, in Kamien and Gdansk."[22] The cult of St. Nicholas reached probably its most extensive circulation in Northern Europe at the end of the eleventh century; certainly by the twelfth, it was well established because this is when the saint became the patron of sailors and merchants across the Baltic and in England (in Gloucester, close to the famous Romanesque cathedral, there is a church dedicated by seamen to the Southern bishop whose foundation dates from that period). Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov's co-edited book *Saints and their lives on the periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*[23] continues to describe the propagation of the cult of the Myrobolite, especially in the Novgorod area. It also comments on some local saints and their miracles (as those at St. Botvid's grave where people of the Svar were baptised and cured of their ailments[24]) in the same temporal and physical setting as the previous work by Garipzanov, but considered in a broader context. The transmission of St. Anne's cult significantly parallels the development of reverence towards St. Nicholas, and the same trade routes were instrumental in this case.

Emulating the Byzantine imperial family and court in their support for the veneration of saints, the royals in Northern Europe built churches dedicated to both Sts. Nicholas and Anne. As noticed, this part of the continent was not sharply divided along the borders created by confessions and liturgical languages. Not only the two mentioned above but a number of other universal saints known in the Christian South and North as well as East and West began to be venerated in Scandinavia and northern

[22] Garipzanov, "Novgorod and the Veneration of the Saints in the Eleventh Century Rus", p. 142. See also Haakon Christie, "Old Oslo", *Medieval Archaeology* 10 (1966), pp. 48–50, and Lorentz Dietrichson, *Sammenlignede Fortegnelse over Norges Kirkebygninger I Middelalderen og Nutiden*, Kristiania: Malling, 1888, p. 6.

[23] Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov (eds.), *Saints and their lives on the periphery. Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200*), Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

[24] H. Antonsson, "The early cult of saints in Scandinavia and the conversion: a comparative perspective", in Antonsson and Garipzanov, *Saints and their lives on the periphery*, pp. 32–34.

Rus' in the Middle Ages, and the establishment of the cult of some universal saints in these regions developed as closely related processes.[25]

We can conclude this chapter by stating that the cult of saints in Europe followed the trade routes from the south to the north of the continent. That happened not only for the obvious reason of the Rus' being converted to Christianity by the Byzantines, with a further implication that the first "national" saints were initially "international"—that is, recognised by the entirety of Christendom as it was at that particular moment. As we have seen, they were "imported" from the Christian South before local martyrs were elevated to such a status. The advance of their popularity on the South-North axis in the rest of Europe commenced before the crucial moment of the conversion of the Slavs. This is also noticeable with regard to other countries—as shown, St. George and St. Catherine of Alexandria were and are still very popular.

A more general conclusion to this section of the book is the renewed emphasis on the fact that aspects from the vitae of the saints not only are important in connection to these holy figures in themselves but also express more general realities particular to the age in which they lived, as Gábor Klaniczay contends in the conclusion to his own chapter within the volume *Saints and their lives on the periphery*: "the book, through same particular martyrs and saints, offers insights into the perilous life of clerics in recent converted territories, where the resistance of the pagans—as eloquently described recently by Karol Modzelewski in his *L'Europe des barbares*—was quite strong and violent".[26] The phenomenon has been assessed by Brown thus, "The rise of the holy man is the *Leitmotif* of the religious revolution of late antiquity",[27] and the effect of this fact was still strongly felt between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the period of most interest for our book. Dal Santo, commenting on Brown's thought

[25] Garipzanov, "The cult of St. Nicholas in the Early Christian in the Early Christian North", p. 230.

[26] Gábor Klaniczay, "Conclusion: North and East European Cults of Saints in Comparison with East-Central Europe", in Antonsson and Garipzanov, *Saints and their lives on the periphery,* p. 293. Karol Modzelewski, *L'Europe des barbares*, Paris: Aubier, 2006; he has published also an article on the topic: "Europa romana, Europa feudale, Europa Barbara", in *Bullettino dell'Istututo Storico per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, vol. 100, 1995–1996, pp. 377–409.

[27] Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 61 (1971), 80–101; in idem. (reprinted), 1982, p. 148. See also Évelyne Patlagean, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982, pp. 2, 7.

on the issue under discussion, states: "A social figure who apparently aroused the admiration of his peers, the late antique Christian holy man revealed, in Brown's view, the secrets of the society that nursed him".[28] Even those dubbed by Averil Cameron as "low-level saints"[29]—in whose status Anne shared until the eighth century—can still inform us with respect to the characteristics of the societies they came from.

Now the history of St. Anne's veneration shall be told; it is marked by numerous accounts of miracles, with many of them having as their object the restoration of fertility and of milk-giving powers to the supplicants.

[28] Dal Santo, *Debating the Saints' Cult*, p. 5.

[29] Cameron, *The Byzantines*, p. 17.

CHAPTER 5

Patristic Texts About Saint Anne's Role as an Intercessor with Regard to the Alleviation of People's Barrenness and Healing in General: Proliferation of Her Cult

St. Anne entered literature in accounts referring Mary's life. The first Late Antiquity/Byzantine authors to mention St. Anne are Origen (c. 184/5–c. 254 AD);[1] Demetrius, bishop of Antioch in the third century (who changed the name of Anna to Sosanna);[2] and Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444; Patriarch from 412 to 444).[3] Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395)

[1] Origen, "Commentarius in Matthaeum" PG 13 X 877A–878D. Here Origen speaks about a "Book of James", and states that the "brethren of the Lord" were sons of Joseph by a former wife. See also "Commentarius in Matthaeum" l, in Erich Klosterman and Ernst Benz, *Origenes Werke* X 17, 1. Aufl. 1935, and Herman Joseph Vogt, *Der Komentar zum Evangelium nack Mattāus*, Stuttgart: Hiersemann, vol. 3, Band 38, 1993.

[2] Cyril of Alexandria, "Quod B. Maria sit Deipara" [The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God], *PG* 76, 259–260. H. R. Smid argues that Joachim's name is taken from the *Old Testament* and the story of Susanna, in H. R. Smid (ed.), *Protevangelium Jacobi: a commentary*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965, p. 26. Terian argues that both names—Joachim and Anna—are inspired by the same story. A. Terian (ed.), *The Armenian Gospel of the Infancy: With Three Early Versions of the Protevangelium of James*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 3 n. 4.

[3] Cyril of Alexandria, "Quod B. Maria sit Deipara", *PG* 76, 259–260.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_5

refers to both the Anne and Joachim in one of his homilies,[4] and so does John Chrysostom (347–407) in his liturgy.[5] Among other texts within the mainstream Christianity that contain remarks with respect to Anne and Joachim are those by Cyril of Jerusalem, fourth century (for him Joachim is Kleopas and Anna is Mariham),[6] and Pseudo-Eustathius (fifth century).[7]

The homilies and the apocryphal literature also narrate about Anne; we shall analyse especially the latter in detail since it constitutes a rich source of information. From the eighth century onwards, homilists in Byzantium popularised Mary's ancestors[8]; that means that the process took place even before the iconophile faction won the dispute around images, a victory that helped further in the propagation of the cult of the saints because it justified their visual representations, which were welcome and circulated. Andrew of Crete (c. 650–c. 740), John of Damascus (646–749), and George of Nicomedia (d. 860) refer to both St. Anne and Joachim[9] and St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1357), in one of his sermons, speaks about Mary's parents.[10] James of Kokkinobaphos (twelfth century), in the "Homily on the Nativity of the Mother of God", gives expression to his imagination with regard to the tenderness between Anne and Mary and

[4] Gregory of Nyssa, "Nativity of Christ", *PG* 46. 1137D. See also Friedhel Mann (ed.), *Die Weihnachtspredigt Gregors von Nyssa: Überlieferungsgeschichte und Text*, doctoral dissertation, Munster, 1975, 277. 47–50, and *Gregorii Nysseni opera. V. X. T. 2, Gregorii Nysseni Sermones. Pars III*, Leiden: Brill, 1996.

[5] *The Divine Liturgy of our Father among the saints John Chrysostom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995; edited and translated by a committee appointed by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain (in Greek and English).

[6] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Discourse on Mary Theotokos", in *Brit. Mus. MS. Oriental*, No. 6784, E. A. T. W. Budge (trans., ed.), *Miscellaneous Coptic texts in the dialect of Upper Egypt*, p. 630.

[7] Pseudo-Eustathios, "Commentary of the Hexaemeron", in De Strycker and Louvain, *Le Protévangile de Jacques*, p. 349.

[8] M. B. Cunningham, in the *Wider than the Heaven*, and "The Use of the *Protevangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God", pp. 167–174, presents some of these homilies and their authors.

[9] George of Nicomedia, "The second homily (concerning Anne and the conception of Mary)", PG 100. 1354A-1376B. Actually, the first five homilies in PG 100 are about Mary's nativity and refer to Anna and Joachim, PG 100. 1335A-1402B.

[10] Saint Gregory Palamas, "On the Nativity of the Mother of God", in *Mary the Mother of God: sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas*, edited by Christopher Veniamin, South Canaan, P.A.: Mount Thabor Pub., 2005, pp. 1–47.

about Anne kissing the child.[11] But a vitae according "to a conventional structure"[12] was written in the West. That happened only late, after 1490, in two versions by Petrus Dorlandus. He also edited with Dominicus van Gelre *Legenda sanctae Annae* (the life of Anne by an anonymous Franciscan),[13] and Ton Brandenbarg published a vita of the saint in the same century.[14]

Once the dissemination of Anne's cult began, it reached Byzantium and then the rest of Europe. The process has commonalities with that at play in regard to other saints venerated on the continent, certainly with St. Nicholas's cult presented here to some extent. It is important to underscore that the differences between the Latin Christendom and Greek/Russian/other European Christian Orthodoxy did not impinge on the manner in which the popularity of the saints developed.[15] Paul Magdalino does not seem surprised by such realities because as early as 1992, he stated that the deepening of the ecclesiastical schism on the continent happened "in a context of growing, not diminishing, contacts at all levels".[16]

[11] James of Kokkinobaphos, "Oration in Nativitatem SS. Deiparae" (In nativitatem sanctissima Domine nostra Dei Genericis Mariae)/"Homily on the Nativity of the Mother of God", *PG* 127. 592A.

[12] Usually the general structure of a saint's *vita* is as follows: it begins with the birth of the saint, frequently accompanied by some miracle foretelling his/her future acclaim; something is recounted about their childhood years (it would normally be pious invention in the likely absence of any authentic tradition, and as such, again adorned with the miraculous); often there would be some dramatic conversion experience. Louth states that this genre ["The lives of saints"] is still developing in our times; Louth, "Hagiography", p. 359.

[13] Dominicus van Gelre and Petrus Dorlandus (eds.), *Legenda sanctae Annae* (the life of Anne by an anonymous Franciscan), Louvain, 1496, and Leipzig, 1497 (with subsequent editions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in many German cities). On contemporary (to us) works about Anne's vita, see also Vasileios Marinis, "The vita of St. Anna/Euphemianos. Introduction, Translation, and Commentary", *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 27–28 (2009–2010), 53–69.

[14] Ton Brandenbarg, *Heilig familieleven. Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke cultuur in de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd (15de/16de eeuw)*, Nijmegen: SUN; the newest edition Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

[15] Garipzanov, "The cult of St. Nicholas in the Early Christian in the Early Christian North", p. 230.

[16] Paul Magdalino, "Introduction", in *The Perception of the Past in 12th-century Europe*, London: Hambledon, 1992, p. xii.

In addition to the renowned persons named in the "Introduction" as supporting the methodological position that the evolution of the cult of the saints took place along the South-North axis, we can add other younger scholars, as for example Elina Räsänen[17] and Jean Wirth.[18] We shall reveal how the idea of expansion from South to North could specifically apply to the popularity of St. Anne.

5.1 The Origin of St. Anne's Cult and Its Dissemination in Europe and Beyond

Most often we cannot pinpoint the exact place and moment when the cult of a saint began. St. Anne's occurred in Jerusalem, and from there is reached Byzantium. We know from Procopius's treatise *On Buildings* that a church dedicated to St. Anne existed in Constantinople in the sixth century, and also where it was located, thus, "In that section of the city which is called Deuteron ('Second', as being marked by the second milestone from the original center of the city, which was near the point of the peninsula) he [Justinian] erected a most revered church of St. Anna, whom some consider to have been the mother of the Virgin and the grandmother of Christ".[19] Theophanes the Continuator indicates that in the ninth-century Leo VI the Macedonian (reigned 886–912), in his desire to have a son, dedicated a chapel to the holy woman and situated it next to his wife's bedroom in the imperial palace.[20] The arrival of some of her relics also had a role in the reverence shown to Anne (we will notice further that the same is the case with respect to Europe in general, and even in territories beyond this continent, wherever her bones were transported). As Ioli Kalavrezou affirms, the holy remains of St. Stephen were brought to the

[17] Elina Räsänen, "Late Medieval Wood Sculptures as Materialized Saints: the Embodiment of Saint Anne in Northern Europe", in *Studies in art history*, Helsinki/Helsingfors, 2010, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 51–65.

[18] Jean Wirth, *Sainte Anne est une sorcière et autres essais,* Geneva: Droz, 2003, p. 140.

[19] Procopius of Caesarea, *De aedificiis* I, 3, 5–11, ed. by J. Houry, Teubner, Leipzig, 1913, and *Buildings*, I, 3, 5–11, ed. by H. B. Dewing and G. Downey, London: William Heinemann, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Edition, v. 7, 1940, pp. 41–42.

[20] Theophanes Continuator, *Chronografia*, Book 3, 43, in Theophanes Continuator, "Chronografia", Book 3, 43, in *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*, edited by Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Bonn: E. Weber, vol. 45, 1838, p. 146.

Byzantine capital in the fifth century[21]—and with them, it is assumed, his cult also came or was reinforced—Anne's might have arrived about the same time. Then, probably as in the case of St. Nicholas, her veneration reached Italy propagated by the Normans, or judging on her seventh-century depiction in Santa Maria Antiqua Church,[22] it was introduced into Rome by Pope Constantine (664–715; in the Holy See 708–715), or both of these. Beda Kleinschmidt thought that the relics of St. Anne were in both Constantinople and Rome in the eighth century; certainly they were instrumental in the propagation of the saint's cult.[23]

Besides literature, the two above-mentioned churches, and her relics, another early (in fact the earliest visual representation) extant sign of her devotion are two Byzantine (?) ivory pieces of liturgical art depicting Anne's Annunciation and the saint in dialogue with her maid in the garden of their house; today they are in the Hermitage Museum and in situ specialists have dated them to the sixth century.[24] Another image, the celebrated fresco in the Church of Santa Maria Antiqua (seventh century), which shows Anne holding the infant Mary, represents her with a halo; this fact indicates that by the time of this depiction she had already achieved sainthood.[25] Anne is rendered frontally, with a direct gaze towards the viewer. The child is on her left side and the opposite hand touches the infant's right knee.

[21] In addition to the literature introduced so far, see also Ioli Kalavrezou, *Helping Hands for the Empire: Imperial ceremonies and the cult of relics at the Byzantine Court*, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2004, pp. 53–81; special relevance here 53–54.

[22] I am aware that there is dispute in scholarship about the dating of that fresco to either seventh or eighth century. After visiting Santa Maria Antiqua in the wake of its reopening (after restoration work) in 2013, my opinion that the fresco was painted in the seventh century has been strengthened. We attended a conference at the British School in Rome and went to visit the church as a group; many of us were from Oxford, but Prof. Peter Brown was also with us.

[23] Beda Kleinschmidt, *Die heilige Anna. Ihre Verehrung in Geschichte, Kunst und Volkstum*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde, Heft 1–3, Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1930, pp. 393–404.

[24] The information regarding the dating in the Hermitage is from Maria Lidova; it was offered after my talk "Apocryphal writing about St. Anne" at the Seminar that forms a part of the project "Saints" carried out at the University of Oxford under the direction of Prof. Bryan Ward-Perkins, 17 November 2015.

[25] The image is reproduced in G. A. Wellen, "Theotokos: Eine ikonographische Abhandlung ȕber das Gottesmutterbild in frȕhchristlichen Zeit", *Het Spektrum*, Utrecht, 1961, p. 221.

This gesture seems to have the same significance as the indicative move in the Byzantine icons of the Virgin *Hodegetria*, that is, to draw attention to the child. *Anna Hodegetria* also exists on the north-west pillar in the above-mentioned tenth-century Church of Direkli Kilise/Belisirma, today Central Turkey, in Ihlara Valley near Urgup[26]; the saint could have been painted there between 976 and 1025.[27] This manner of representation belongs at the same time to the iconographic type *Anna Eleousa* (of tenderness).[28] In Santa Maria Antiqua, despite the fact that a large area of the painting on the upper right, including Anne's left eye and a part of Mary's body, is now missing, it is still very noticeable that the child is depicted in a frontal pose; an earring decorates her right earlobe. The damage makes it difficult to guess the state of her right hand, but what remains suggests the blessing gesture. Mary's face has also been significantly affected by the passing of time, but her gaze is clearly directed to the beholder. The child's nimbus has been partially destroyed. A similar representation exists in a fresco in Cozia Monastery, Wallachia; it was painted in 1390.[29] Sharon Gerstel argues that the depictions in churches of Anne as a mother holding the Virgin imply a female audience and that they were destined to be viewed by female population because of the saint's association with childbirth.[30] For this researcher, Santa Maria Antiqua illustrates precisely such a point. In addition to the *Anna lactans* fresco and close to it, this church also contains portraits of the three holy mothers, Anne, the Virgin (*Kyriotissa* type), and Elizabeth, painted from left to right and dating also to the seventh century. The placement of their images in the right aisle of the church in Roma, which was destined for women, proves that Gerstel is right.[31]

[26] N. Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce: region du Hasan Dağı*, Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1963 [pp. 183–192], p. 187.

[27] Idem, p. 185.

[28] P. Romanelli et P. J. Nordhagen, *Santa Maria Antiqua,* Libreria dello Stato, Ist. poligrafico dello Stato, Roma, 1964 (reprinted 1999); Hirofumi Sugawara, "Anna Eleousa: Representation of Tenderness", *Patrimonium*, 2012, no. 5, pp. 179–194.

[29] Gamaliil Vaida, *Mănăstirea Cozia: vestita ctitorie a lui Mircea voievod cel mare: 600 de ani de existență*, Râmnicu-Vâlcea: Editura Episcopiei Râmnicului și Argeșului, 1986, and the notice in the porch of Trinity Church, Cozia Monastery.

[30] Sharon E. J. Gerstel, "Painted sources for female piety in Medieval Byzantium", DOP 52, 1998, [pp. 89–111], p. 98.

[31] Gerstel, "Painted sources for female piety", p. 98. To confirm this, see also Stephen Lucey, "The Church of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome: Contextual Study 6th–9th c.", doctoral dissertation unpublished, Rutgers University, 1999, p. 87.

From Italy the cult of Anne gradually reached France, Austria, Germany, the Baltic countries, and England. That was because Southern and Northern Europe were in permanent communication both by water (there was intense circulation between the Mediterranean and the North Sea) and also by overland: when possible, people used Roman roads. As we shall demonstrate in Chap. 7, the Egnatian Way, one of the latter, was the main transportation route in the Byzantine Empire.[32] In the Late Medieval

[32] The *Via Egnatia* (Greek: Ἐγνατία Ὁδός), as noticed above, crossed the Roman provinces of Illyricum, Macedonia, and Thrace, running through the territory that is now part of modern Albania, the Republic of Macedonia, Greece, and European Turkey. From Dyrrachium and Avlona on the Adriatic Sea, the road followed a difficult route along the river Genusus (Shkumbin), over the Candaviae Mountains and thence to the highlands around Lake Ohrid. It then turned south, following several high mountain passes to reach the northern coastline of the Aegean Sea at Thessaloniki. From there it ran through Thrace to the city of Byzantium/Constantinople. It covered a total distance of about 1120 km (696 miles/746 Roman miles). Like other major Roman roads, it was about 6 metres (19.6 ft) wide, paved with large polygonal stone slabs or covered with a hard layer of sand. Gottlieb Lucas F. Tafel, *De* Via *Militari Romanorum Egnatia, qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur, dissertation geographica*, Tubingen: Kessinger Publishing, 1842; Via *Militaris Romanorum Egnatia qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur*, Dissertatio Geographica/Doctoral dissertation, Tubingen, 1841. Tafel's works are still the most comprehensive on this topic to date. See also the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, vol. 2, p. 749; P. Soustal and J. Koder, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, Vienna: Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981; Elena Koytcheva, "Logistical problems for the movement of the early crusaders through the Balkans: transport and road systems", in Elizabeth Jeffreys (ed.), *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, vol. 2, p. 54; Elisabeth Malamut, *Sur la route des saints byzantins*, CNRS Éditions, Paris, 1993, and E. A. Zachariadou "Marginalia on the History of Epirus and Albania (1380–1418)", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 78, 1988, reprinted in *Studies in Pre-Ottoman Turkey and the Ottomans*, Variorum (Collected Studies Series), Aldershot/Burlington: Ashgate, 2007, p. 195, and *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380–1699)*, pp. 13 ff.; A. Ducellier, *La façade maritime de l'Albanie au Moyen Age, Durazzo et Valona du XI e au XVe siècle*, Thessalonique 1981, 25 et 76 ff.; V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, "Прилог за *Via Egnatia* на делницата Lychnidos-Pons Servilii", [Contribution on the section Lychnidos-Pons Servilia of the *Via Egnatia*], *Лихнид* 6, 1988, pp. 37–52; P. Magdalino, "Between Romaniae: Thessaly and Epirus in the Later Middle Ages", in B. Arbel, B. Hamilton, D. Jacoby (eds.), *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, London, [Karlsruher Virtual Catalogue], 1989, p. 143; Brendan Osswald, "The Ethnic Composition of Medieval Epirus", in S. G. Ellis and Lud'a Klusakova (eds.), *Imaging frontiers, contesting identities*, Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006, pp. 142–131. See also L. Safran, "Exploring Artistic Links Between Epiros and Apulia in the Thirteenth Century: The Problem of Sculpture and Wall Painting"; Evangelos Chrysos (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium "The Despotate of Epirus"* (Arta 27–31 May 1990),

period, additionally to merchants, also pilgrims, crusaders, and troubadours were agents of proliferation of Anne's cult—and generally of the veneration of the saints. Also, as Maurice Keen exemplifies: "The young clarks of the twelfth century were no less compulsive travellers than the knights, and their wandering too helped to make court culture [which, at that time was also that of the Church] as well as the culture of the schools international".[33] Supplementary to these factors, as Nixon pertinently indicates, individual initiatives might have also contributed to Anne's popularity. In regard to this, the scholar asserts: "a patron commissions an image; a priest promotes devotion at a local level; a prominent humanist writes a book that helps spreading the cult internationally; a pilgrim visits a site where a famed healing relics is displayed; a theologian reminisces".[34] Her statement is valid with respect to the reverence expressed towards any saint; in many cases it materialises in homilies or other writings dedicated to him/her and in shrines constructed to honour a particular holy person, as we noticed with respect to Anne in Byzantium.

From the fact that the Benedictine canoness Hroswitha of Gandersheim (today Bad Gandersheim, Lower Saxony) wrote about the saint in the tenth century, we know that by that time the cult of Anne (and Joachim) had gained acceptance throughout Europe.[35] The agents involved in its advancement brought it from the Holy Land and Byzantium to, as we have seen, Cappadocia,[36] the Greek islands (on Patmos there is a chapel dedicated to her, as tradition has it, by the abbot Christodoulos in 1088; it is right in front of the Cave of the Apocalypse, to one side) and to the northern countries mentioned above. An essential moment in the development of Anne's cult in the East, especially in the context of a dis-

Mousikophilologikos Syllogos Artēs "O Skouphas", Arta, 1992, pp. 453–474; Nicolas Oikonomides, *The Medieval Via Egnatia. Social and Economic Life in Byzantium*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, ch. XIII, pp. 9–12 and various other references; Donald M. Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus)* ca. *1100–1460: a genealogical and prosopographical study*, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, 1968.

[33] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 34.

[34] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 9.

[35] Hroswitha of Gandersheim, "Historia Nativitatis Sub Nomine Jacobo Fratris Domini", in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 147. St. Anne is mentioned by name in 74, 77 and Joachim in 73, 74, 77, and 78.

[36] More information about the Direkli Kilise, Belisırma, in N. Thierry, *Nouvelles églises rupestres de Cappadoce*, p. 185, 187 [pp. 183–192].

cussion about nourishment, was the interval between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.[37] As we shall see in Chap. 8, this is also the period when visual representations of *Anna Galaktotrophousa*—which constitutes examples of a particular aspect of her veneration—occurred in iconography. That happened in churches along the Egnatian Way and in the coastal area of Greece. The next chapter is dedicated exclusively to this latter phenomenon, therefore at present we will not go into details concerning the saint's veneration in this geographical region. The literature, especially the apocryphal texts, also describes the maternity aspect of Anne's life; it does so much earlier. We shall analyse the texts dedicated to this topic in Chap. 6.

The scene of breastfeeding, either remarked in literature or visually represented, made St. Anne loved and trusted by people wishing children and in need of healing. Actually, in connection to her attributions, a peculiarity is to be observed: after the sixteenth century it underwent a shift. From originally being regarded as an intercessor for the production of offspring on behalf of barren mothers (and later for restoration to health), the saint was also trusted with the power of deliverance from the temptation to sexual sin. Nixon opines that such a change was connected to the morality of the sixteenth century; St. Anne became then the model of a virtuous

[37] Certainly this is the case if we look at additional iconography of St. Anne; in the main body of our text we illustrate *Anna lactans*, but the saint has been depicted also in other scenes. For example, she appears by herself, standing, in St. Nicholas Orphanos, Thessaloniki, painted in 1310–1320; see C. Bakirtzis, R. Hamann-Mac Lean, and H. Hallensleben (eds.), *Agioς Nikolaoς Orfanóς*: *Oi to icografiveς*, Thessaloniki, 2003, and Alexander P. Kazhdan (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 1471–1472. Further, see the Nestorian Church of Famagusta, Cyprus (fourteenth century); more on the latter in Michele Bacci's "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the Nestorian Church of Famagusta", included in *Δελτιον Της Χριστιανκης Αρχαιολογικης Εταιρειας*, vol. 27, Athens, 2006, pp. 206–220 (this church is the subject of that particular chapter), and in C. Mango, Byzantine architecture, Milan: Electa Editrice, 1978, pp. 159–160, 227, 261. Other examples of churches where St. Anne is depicted are *Timios Stavros* at Pelendri (during the rule of the Latin Ioannes Lusignan; 1353–1374/5); the Royal Church (Kraljeva Crkva, Studenica Monastery (1314)), H. Horst Hallensleben, *Die Malerschule des Kőnigs Milutin: Untersuchungen zum Werkeiner byzantinischen Malerwerkstatt zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Giessen: H. Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1963. In 2011 I visited St. Nicholas Orphanos in Thessaloniki and the Church of St. Mary Peribleptos in Mistra, Peloponnese.

mother[38] and the patron of "'lawfully married' folk".[39] That is also in addition to her being credited with the power of salvation.[40]

In Western Europe, only from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is there unmistakable evidence that St. Anne was honoured in her own right. Focusing at the moment on the Central and Northern Europe, we shall say that confraternities were erected in St. Anne's honour since the thirteenth century. Pilgrimages at that time developed around the many churches and shrines dedicated to her. Nixon sees the cause of Anne's popularity at that time as also consisting in the wishes of educated clerics to promote the saint in order to exercise control over lay piety for religious, economic, and social purposes.[41] She believes that Anne's ecclesiastical supporters frequently used her as a model of sober domesticity for women.[42]And yet, as a gender model, the saint embodied conflicts between medieval and early modern ideas about sanctity and sexuality (the legend of Trinubium—the three marriages of Anne was popular for a while[43]; eventually it has almost become forgotten). In Germany priests were crucially instrumental in encouraging Anne's recognition. They promoted her as having salvific power; that is not unexpected since redemption was a matter of urgent concern to late medieval German Christians.[44] Churches, monasteries, and confraternities (and also rulers) at a particular point in the sixteenth century made her the patroness of wealth in order to fundraise in an increasingly competitive religious landscape.[45] Shrines and altars were dedicated to St. Anne. For instance the already-mentioned Ghent, in East Flanders, which from the twelfth century on was an

[38] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, chapter 2, and some suggestion towards that idea on pp. 56, 150–53, 158, 160–61, and 164.

[39] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 76.

[40] Idem, p. 42.

[41] Virginia, Nixon, *Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe*, Pennsylvania State University Press 2004, p. 69.

[42] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, pp. 70–71 and a large part of chapter 5.

[43] Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'Ombre des ancêtres.Essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté*, Paris: Fayard, 2000, pp. 101–103. See also, Mellie Naydenova-Slade and David Park, "The Earliest Holy Kinship Image, the Salomite Controversy, and a Little-Known Centre of Learning in Northern England in the Twelfth Century", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2008, vol. 71, pp. 95–119.

[44] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, Chap. 3, "Saint Anne and Concepts of Salvation in Late Medieval Germany", pp. 41–55, 67.

[45] Nixon, "*Mary's Mother*", pp. 77–78.

important centre of her cult, had among many churches erected in the medieval period one dedicated to St. Anne. The intense trade along the two rivers on which the city is located, Scheldt and Lys, and also overland, made this municipality become one of the largest and richest in Northern Europe. St. Anne Church still exists there today—in fact an entire area of the city is named after her. Also lay brotherhoods adopted the saint as their patroness, and many families named their daughters for her. Nevertheless, I would say that in Northern Europe St. Anne's relics—miraculously discovered and miracle-working—played a major role in the development of her adoration.

Returning pilgrims and crusaders from the East brought relics of Anne to a number of churches in Central and Northern Europe, including most famously those at Apt in Provence, near Avignon, Chartres, Cologne, Ghent, Limberg, Mainz, Dűren (the latter since 1501[46]), as well as Notre Dame d'Auray in Brittany.[47] Beda Kleinschmidt states that Louis of Blois brought the saint's head from Constantinople to Chartres as early as 1204.[48] He flags out that the veneration of Anne's relics was also very intense in Basel, Hartwich, Wȕrttenberg, Bremen, and Dȕren. Actually, the latter has been the main place of pilgrimage for Anne since 1506, when Pope Julius II decreed that her remains should be kept there. Dominicus van Gelre and Petrus Dorlandus report the presence of St. Anne relics in St. Peter's Church in Cologne—a finger.[49] Her right hand is in the church which bears her name in Vienna. It is said that St. Birgitta acquired the left arm from the Church of San Paolo fuori le Mura/St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome for the Vadstena Abbey,[50] where a large *Anna Selbdritt* sculpture also exists.

[46] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 33.

[47] J. F. Nicholls and John Taylor, "Bristol Past and Present", in John Coulson (ed.), *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 2, 1881; Nicholas Adams, "St Anne", in John Latime, *The Saints*, 1900; Marguerite Fedden, *The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century*, 1963.

[48] B. Kleinschmidt, *Die heilige Anna*; about relics in general, see pp. 393–404; for the story of St. Anne's head, see p. 79.

[49] Dominicus van Gelre and Petrus Dorlandus (eds.), *The Legenda sanctae Annae*; for details see T. Brandenbarg, *Heilig familieleven. Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna*, pp. 279–281, and Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anna in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Forschungen zur Kirchen und Dogmengeschichte, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992.

[50] Saint Birgitta [of Vadstena] or Bridget of Sweden (1303–1373), "Revelation", in Bridget Morris (ed.), Denis Searby (trans.), *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden. Books vi-vii*, Liber Caelestis, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, vol. 3, VI.104.

Räsänen reiterates some of the stories about the saint's relics[51]and repeats a prayer connected to one of them; it addresses the issue of fecundity.[52] Also, Warner narrates that according to a most ancient and uninterrupted tradition, Anne's body was carried to Gaul by the same ship which brought Lazarus and his sisters there in the first century of the Christian era, during the persecutions in the Roman Empire, which included the province of Palestine. From their hands, the saint's remains were taken for safekeeping to Apt (at that time Apta Julia).[53] Consequently, they were buried in an underground church or crypt in this place. The first bishop there, St. Auspicius (d. before 118), took further precautions to guard this holy treasure from desecration and had the body reinterred still deeper in the subterranean chapel, which in time was forgotten until the end of the eighth century. After Charlemagne's decisive victory over the Saracens, peace and security returned to Gaul. It was then that the people began to restore and rebuild the holy places destroyed or desecrated by the invaders and in this context the cathedral in Apt was reconsecrated and the priests and bishops began to look for the exact spot where the sarcophagus of St. Anne was.

At Easter 776 the first alleged miracle happened. The story is known, especially given the prestigious characters involved in it, and it circulated intensely in the Middle Ages, but it is too important to be left out of a survey on the cult of Anne. A boy of 14, John, the son of Baron Casanova, deaf, dumb, and blind from birth, was healed and the place where the relics were buried was revealed to him after that. They were found under some flagstones in the floor, close to the steps of the high altar. Charlemagne (d. 814) wrote a letter—extant—to Pope Adrian I (772–795) with the exact narrative of the discovery.[54] This is why afterwards the main cities of

[51] Elina Räsänen, "Late Medieval Wood Sculptures as Materialized Saints: the Embodiment of Saint Anne in Northern Europe", in *Studies in art history*, Helsinki/Helsingfors 2010, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 51–55. See also Jean Wirth, *Sainte Anne est une sorcière et autres essais*, Geneva: Droz, 2003.

[52] E. Räsänen, "The Embodiment of Saint Anne in Northern Europe", p. 54.

[53] Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde. On Fairy Tales and their Tellers*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1994, pp. 81–82. Gaul was the province of the Roman Empire which included what are now the countries of France and upper Italy.

[54] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p. 81 and Anonymous, *Good St. Anne*, Charlotte, North Carolina: Saint Benedict Press, 2009. I was unable to find this letter of Charlemagne to Pope Adrian I.

Gaul requested from the church in Apt portions of the sacred body. Fragments detached from the head found their way to various places through the favour of sovereigns or powerful prelates (one is still in the Cathedral of Bologna), but the greatest portion of St. Anne's sacred body still reposes in the French church. The left arm of the saint was requested and obtained by the Popes and then, as just indicated, given into the care of the Benedictine monks in the Church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura monastery (from which St. Birgitta obtained a fragment). Obviously, all these events contributed to the development of all the cult of the saint in Northern Europe. What is to be underlined is that the particular story in Apt, which is central to the saint's cult in the area and influential for others happening in connection to it, occurs in the same period when Byzantine homilies propagated Anne and Joachim's veneration. It seems that the eighth century marks a crucial moment in the advancement of Anne's cult in both halves of Christendom. However, each of them deployed a different means in this process: preponderantly relics in the North and texts in the South.

Warner has written that Anna of Austria prayed at the cathedral in Apt to have a son. After the birth of the Dauphin, the future Louis XIV, in 1621, the Queen endowed it with a reliquary chapel and acquired more relics of the saint (two fingers are mentioned[55]). Probably these were bones which were initially a part of the St. Anne's body and then detached and sent away to another church. The Queen also publicised her miracle-working patron, as later did her son. Another story recounted by Warner concerns the already-mentioned church in Brittany (Notre Dame d'Auray), which was built in 1625 and then replaced (1865–1872) by the existing basilica. Almost simultaneously with the events in Provence, a peasant called Yves Nicolazic had a vision of St. Anne in which she asked for the restoration of a chapel that had been dedicated to her and which stood in his fields; two years later, in 1623, while ploughing nearby, he dug up a statue of a goddess suckling two infants—which Warner describes as "possibly the Roman Bons Dea—which was identified as a miraculous *Anna Selbdritt*". The fact that Anne de Bretagne, who had died in 1514, bore the name of the Virgin's mother triggered the veneration of this object: "the statue was enshrined at Auray, Saint Anne was declared a patron saint of Brittany and became the focus of the great annual *pardon* pilgrimages

[55] Werner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p. 82.

which still take place [in the province]".[56] The author says further that the cult was diffused to the newly colonies France established as part of the French culture. As a result, it was natural for the Canadians to venerate St. Anne and she is the official patroness of the Province of Quebec; Canada itself claims the title of the "Land of St. Anne". The saint has many churches and shrines dedicated to her in that country. For example, Marie de l'Incarnation, a widow who had entered the Ursuline teaching order, founded a branch of the order and built a church dedicated to St. Anne in Beaupré, Quebec, in 1639. In 1650 the church was enlarged and an even larger one was built in 1656.[57] Anne of Austria herself embroidered the robe with which the votive statue of Sainte Anne de Beaupré is adorned on special occasions. In May 1960, as mentioned, the Benedictines from Apt gave the forearm of the saint to this shrine.[58] One church dedicated to St. Anne was constructed in 1869 in Fall River. The founder, Fr. Montaubricq, was a native of Bordeaux, but he might have come from Brittany, where the shrine in d'Auray is located and the centre of religiosity concerning St. Anne is. Nowadays, the saint is very popular in many other countries, some very far away from her place of origin, and not only on the American continent (in the USA itself, for instance, there is a Catholic Parish Church of St. Anne in Arvada, Colorado, erected in 1920). Anne's popularity has

[56] Ibid.

[57] I have visited this church a few times between 1993 and 1997 and I found in a booklet in the church containing its story, thus: one night in 1650, some sailors were overtaken on the St. Lawrence by a frightful storm. Their vessel was driven by the wind and waves towards the rocky banks. They were seemingly about to perish, and no earthly aid was near. They implored the help of good St. Anne, the patroness of their beloved Brittany, and vowed, if saved, to build a chapel in her honour on whatever spot they should land. Morning dawned, and to their great astonishment, they found themselves on the north bank of the river at Beaupré. They landed and erected a little shrine in the honour of the saint. In 1656, Beaupré was made a parish by Msgr. de Laval, Bishop of Quebec. A parish church was erected the following year. While the foundation of the building was being laid, the first attested miracle was effected. Louis Guimond, who was ill for a long time, in his ardent devotion to St. Anne, brought three stones to be incorporated into the walls. After accomplishing this, he was suddenly and completely cured. The wonders began to multiply. They were attested by Bishop de Laval in 1662. In the same notice, it is recorded that the Blessed Marie of the Incarnation wrote to a relative who lived in France: "Some twenty miles from here … is a church of St. Anne in which Our Lord works great wonders for the sake of the holy mother of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. At this shrine, paralytics obtain strength to walk, the blind receive their sight, and the sick, no matter what their ailment may be, regain their health."

[58] Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p. 83.

reached even more remote areas as, for instance, India.[59] There are schools and churches in her name in Goa, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and several other states.

In addition to all the factors mentioned above as contributing to the increase in Anne's veneration, medieval religious offices dedicated to her contributed to this. Like those in Byzantium, they declared St. Anne to be the only one worthy of giving birth to the mother of Christ and recalls how the fruit of her womb fills the world with dancing and joy.[60] Räsänen asserts the importance of stories, writings, and legends about St. Anne in this context and tells the story of Brother Erik Simonson, who sometime in the middle of the fifteenth century, wrote in Old Swedish homilies in the scriptorium of the above-mentioned Vadstena Abbey, the Birgittine's double convent in Västergötland, Sweden.[61] Among them there was one about St. Anne. After recalling her *vita* written by Ton Brandenbarg in the late fifteenth century,[62] which we mentioned in Chap. 5, the writer presents ten miracle stories testifying to the power of the holy grandmother. Nixon also presents some of the miracles attributed to St. Anne, some as recalled by Luther.[63] They are meant to indicate not only her high position in the celestial realm but also the power of her images—in this case one in

[59] Information from Mallica Kumbera Landrus, who works at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

[60] As Räsänen indicates, one such office exists in a manuscript that belongs to the collection of the National Library of Finland (F. m. IV.156 f. 24r–v). For the transcription of the Latin text, see *Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen Aikakauskirja*—[*The Journal of the Finnish Antiquarian Society*], Finnish Archaeological periodicals 116, Helsinki, 2009, pp. 127–128. The office is catalogued in Ilkka Taitto, "Catalogue of medieval Manuscript Fragments in the Helsinki University Library fragmenta membranea IV: 1–2. Antiphonaria", *Helsingin yliopiston kirjaston julkaisuja* [Helsinki University Library publications] 67, Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto [Helsinki University Library], Helsinki, 2001, pp. 161–164. See also Jesse M. J. Keskiaho, "En grupp handskrifter från slutet av. 1400-talet—från Nådendals scriptorium?" [A group of (hand) writings from the end of 1400 in Nådendals scriptorium?], *Historisk Tidskrift for Finland* 93, 3/2008, pp. 318–350, especially 341–342. For other examples on Saint Anne's liturgy, see Paul-Victor Charland, *Madame saincte Anne et son cult au moyen age* I–II, Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1911–1913.

[61] Räsänen, "The Embodiment of Saint Anne in Northern Europe", p. 51. See Erik Simonson "Legenden om Sankta Anna 1a", *Sermones conscripti et collecti per fratrem Ericum Symonis*, Codex Ups. C 9, 1464.

[62] Ton Brandenbarg, *Heiling Familieleven*: *Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke,* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

[63] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 39.

three dimensions, namely, a statue. One of these tales refers to a bishop called Remigius, who fell into a sinful life and lost the sight in his eyes. Repentant, he knelt in front of the image of the Virgin, crying and asking for mercy. Her image came to life and told him that she is upset with him and that he should go to her mother, Anne. The bishop obeyed saying that he "is going to do as children do when they have disobeyed their mother and know they will be turned away. They run to their mother's mother asking for help and she helps them." The statue of St. Anne accepted the bishop's prayers for healing and he promised to venerate her and her family in various ways. After interceding for him, St. Anne asked Remigius to return to the Virgin, who eventually forgave him because she did not want to deny her mother anything. She ordered him to dictate a thanksgiving song to the saint for being forgiven and cured, and so he did.[64]

This narration leads us to the discussion on the role of visual representations in the Middle Ages. For the Byzantines and for people who comment on their liturgical art, these works evoke a holy person or are "windows" into the realm of the Holy. Among these, the three-dimensional representations, such as sculpted bodies of the holy persons—which resemble those of their medieval beholders—become alive, according to Räsänen. Thus, these images behave like humans or rather like living, sacred people, that is, they are able to perform miracles, as was the case above with the statues of the Virgin and St. Anne.[65] The researcher explains

[64] Anna patens introitus,/ad gloriam post obitus,/aduocatrix populi,/mei salus oculi,/tu reducis hominem,/ad mariam virginem./Amen.

Anna, the well-known gateway/to glory after death,/advocate of the people,/who cured my eye/and led a man/back to the Virgin Mary./Amen. Räsänen, "Late Medieval Wood Sculptures as Materialized Saints", p. 54.

[65] On images coming to life, see E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion. A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, London: Phaidon, 1960, pp. 80–98; Ringbom, "Devotional Images", pp. 159–170; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, esp. Chap. 11; Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence. History of the Image before the Era of Art,* trans. E. Jephcott, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 (originally published as *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschicte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst*, Munich 1990); André Vauchez, *Saints, prophetes et visionnaires. Le pouvoir surnaturel au Moyen Age*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1999, p. 79–91; Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular Piety and Art in the Late Middle Ages. Image worship and idolatry in England 1350–1500*, New York, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002, passim. For examples of other miracles of St. Anne coming to life, see Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, esp. pp. 97–114.

how visual representations such as *Anna Selbdritt*, distinctive to the northern part of Europe, could have produced such an impression without any difficulty. Furthermore, these images are meant to illustrate the bloodline connecting St. Anne, the Virgin Mary, and the Christ Child, as for example in an *Anna Selbdritt* statue from Wartburg, where Mary's clothing and gestures and even her face often reproduce those of her mother, thus underlining the continuity across generations. The infant Christ is rendered gesturing as an exceptionally wise toddler or as an adolescent. The Virgin and the Christ Child are often diminutive in comparison to St. Anne (one would have expected to see Mother Mary represented as equal in size to her own mother). This manner of representation is intended to highlight their humanity; the art of the Middle Ages everywhere was particularly concerned with this, as we also shall see in other places in the book, especially in Chap. 7.

In connection to our discussion on nourishment, we shall say that for Räsänen the respective pieces of religious art display that side of the matter which *feeds*—maternity, a word etymologically connected to another word—material; she exemplifies her ideas through a wood sculpture of *Anna Selbdritt* from c. 1430 in the National Museum of Finland. As seen in Chap. 3 when mentioning the lactation miracle of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to which Räsänen also refers, the physical capacities of the sculptures, such as having secretions like humans, or rather like mystics, heightened their impact. In the same manner, the image of the Virgin in an icon from the thirteenth century become animated and her breasts streamed oil; upon seeing this, a Saracen who had looted the icon converted to Christianity; the miracle is recounted in a manuscript illustration.[66]

All these means: relics, homilies, visual works, stories, as well as sacred music, aided the growth of St. Anne's cult until the late Middle Ages. Martin Luther (1483–1546) believed that St. Anne miraculously saved him from a difficult situation. Nixon believes that he "must have been an enthusiastic devotee himself, for it was to St. Anne that he made his vow in the thunderstorm in 1505: 'Help, dear Saint Anne—I'll become a monk!'"[67] The theologian testifies to the rapid dispersal of the saint's cult

[66] Sixten Ringbom, "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions. Notes on the place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* VI: 73, March 1969, p. 160.

[67] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nochfolger, vol. 4 (out of the 97 published between 1883 and 1986), p. 440. See also Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 38.

in Germany thus: "As I recall it, the big event of St. Anna's arrival happened when I was a boy of fifteen [in 1498]. Before that nobody knew anything about her; then a fellow came and brought Saint Anne. She caught on right away and everybody was paying attention to her."[68] That might have happened either in Eisleben (where the theologian was born) or in Eisenach, Central Germany (where he studied in 1498–1501), and the event fits into the pattern of the cult's expansion out of Rhineland into Eastern Germany. In Austria it seems that a peak in Anne's popularity was reached in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when churches were constructed and dedicated to her, especially in the rural area of the Styria region. Their altarpieces, frescos, and statues nearly always represent *Anna Selbdritt*.[69] Some of the sculptures and paintings of *Anna Selbdritt* made before 1500 and common to Austria, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, and Netherlands have survived.[70]An unusual rendering of *Anna Selbdritt* in painting dating from the fourteenth century was also discovered in the Nestorian Church at Famagusta, Cyprus.[71]

Topography testifies that on the British Islands, St. Anne has been known since Anglo-Saxon times, when she was established as a patron saint of healing. Six hundred years ago (1378–1382) pressure was exerted by two English Archbishops to include the feast of St. Anne in the Catholic calendar, though official recognition took two more centuries to be achieved.[72] In 1378, the feast of St. Anne was celebrated for the first time

[68] Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4, p. 383. For his relationship with Catholicism, see among other sources, *Luther's Lives: Two Contemporary Accounts of Martin Luther*, edited by Philipp Melanchthon, transl. by Elizabeth Vandiver, Ralph Keen, and Thomas D. Frazel (eds.), Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2002, especially p. 12.

[69] I thank Wiltraud Resch, Professor in Liturgy, Christian art, and iconography in the Theology Faculty, University of Graz, for sending me two *Anna Selbdritt* images; I have not managed to find the source for one of them, but I found other similar images from Austria, Germany, and Finland in literature. Räsänen has a few illustrations from the latter country in her "Late Medieval Wood Sculptures as Materialized Saints".

[70] J. H. Emminghaus, "Anna Selbdritt", *LChrl*, V, cols 185–190; A. Reime and E. von Witzleben, "Anna, hi. IV. Ikonographie, 2. Anna Selbdritt", *Marienlexikon,* R. Bäumer and L. Scheffsczyk (eds.), *St. Ottilien*, 1988, 1, 155–156; Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 55.

[71] Michele Bacci, "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the Nestorian Church of Famagusta", on "Anna Selbdritt", pp. 212–213 and Fig. 4 on p. 213.

[72] Nicholas Adams, "St. Anne", in John Coulson (ed.), C. C. Martindale (introd.), *The Saints. A Concise Biographical Dictionary*, Bristol: Caxton Publishing Company London, 1958.

in England on 26 July.[73] Signs of her adoration in these territories are, for instance, St. Ann's Well, on the slopes of the Malvern Hills above Great Malvern, on a path leading up to the Worcestershire Beacon. This is actually the Malvern Chalybeate Spring and was originally on the land owned by the Malvern Priory which was dissolved in 1539. James McKay writes that the spring or well, with very pure water and some iron content helpful for people's well-being, is named after St. Anne; he indicates that she is the patron saint of many wells.[74] Roy Palmer suggests that initially the spring may have been dedicated to Anu, a Celtic water goddess.[75] It is not impossible for this to be the case and for the priors to have renamed it after the monastery was already established there, on the basis of the saint's association with healing waters. Among other unpublished sites, there is another St. Anne's well—in Brighton and Hove City (not far from the Hove seafront). According to a plaque next to it, it dates from Saxon times; on top of its initial attribution to the maternal grandmother of Christ, a local legend involving an "Anna" was added: after the lover of lady Anna Frieda was murdered her tears miraculously became a spring.[76] I only found out about this site by chance when visiting the area.

There is also a chapel of St. Anne in the woods nearby Brislington, which was built in the fifteenth century next to a well in what was to become a village later and is now part of Bristol City. According to J. F. Nicholls and J. Taylor, it may have been built by the Barons de la Warr who held the nearby manor (of Brislington) from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. It appears to have been under the guardianship of Keynsham Abbey until the Dissolution of the Monasteries.[77] Henry VII (1457–1509) visited this chapel. His near contemporary William Wyrcestre (c. 1415–c. 1482), born in Bristol, described the chapel as being 19 by 5 "virgas" in size, with 19 buttresses. Six thick square candles, rather improbably

[73] Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of Rosary in the Middle Ages*, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University, 1997.

[74] James McKay, The British Camp on the Herefordshire Beacon. Essays on Scenes and Incidents in the Lives of the Ancient Britons, Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 1875.

[75] Roy Palmer, *The Folklore of Hereford and Worcester*, Herefordshire: Logaston Press, 1992, p. 5.

[76] The commemorative plaque in St. Anne's Gardens in Brigton and Hove, next to the well.

[77] James Fawckner Nicholls and John Taylor, *Bristol. Past and Present*, Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith; London: Griffith and Farran, vol. 1 ("Ecclesiastical History"), 1881.

described as 80 feet tall, were provided just before each Whitsuntide by the guilds of weavers and cordwainers and were placed before the altar. There were 13 other candles before an image of St. Anne. By the time the shrine was built here, the saint was known as the patroness of sailors, ports, and harbours because in the fifteenth century 32 model ships and boats were used for receiving offerings and had incense burned in them. In the sixteenth century the chapel was a popular place of worship and pilgrimage.[78] Marguerite Fedden has noted that in the twentieth century people from France came to venerate St. Anne here: "Recently [n.a. before the 1960s] Brittany onion boys came and said a prayer at St. Anne in the Wood."[79] Among other shrines having St. Anne as their patron, in Great Britain the Cathedral in Leeds and a chapel in Exeter are also known to me. I think this cathedral is the only one in the world to be dedicated to Mary's mother; we visited it and dedicated an entire session to the saint at the International Congress of Medieval Studies in 2013.[80] I will not describe the latter two shrines in details as they were built in recent times and the visual representations they contain do not refer to milk nourishment (in the cathedral there is a statue of St. Anne teaching Mary to read). Nevertheless, they are testimonies to modern and contemporary fascination with the saint. Nixon signals a gradual decline in the devotion to Anne in the 1500s by comparison to its enthusiastic advent, but the saint is certainly still present in the religious landscape, and furthermore, she entered the academic one. The situation with respect to Anne's cult in the sixteenth century could be explained through the fact that modes of religious practice and ideas about women's place in family life generally began to change at the end of the Middle Ages, and a shift in attitudes about the sexual and social role of

[78] William Worcester, *Itinerarium*; the part relating to Bristol was published by James Dallaway under the title *William Wyrcestre Redivivus* in 1823 and reprinted in his *Antiquities of Bristowe* in 1834. See Hugh Chisholm (ed.), "William Worcester", in Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 28 (11th ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 821.

[79] Marguerite Fedden, "St Anne's Well", in *Bristol Vignettes*, Bristol: Burleigh Press, 1963 (second edition), chapter v.

[80] Leeds Cathedral, formally the Cathedral Church of St Anne, commonly known as St. Anne's Cathedral, is the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Diocese of Leeds and is the seat of the Bishop of Leeds. The previous shrine—a church dedicated to the same saint in 1878—was demolished around 1900. The current cathedral was completed in 1904 and was restored in 2006. After that renovation the relics of the English Catholic martyrs, Blessed Fr. Peter Snow and Ralph Grimston, were placed in the altar. See Peter Leach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding, Leeds, Bradford and the North*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009.

married women took place. For instance, in Northern Europe that can be clearly seen when one compares older and newer types of reports of miracles performed by the relics of Anne. For example, those described in the book on this subject compiled at the shrine of the saint within the Wilhemite Convent in Limberg are largely miracles of healing (epitomising the older approach). Although the relic (a cloth) of the Limberg shrine was late, probably discovered in the sixteenth century, the tellers of miracles in connection with it came from a long-established tradition. In contrast, the miracles reported for the relics of Anne's finger at St. Peter Church in Cologne present features of the new form of the cult, for instance deliverance from temptation to sexual sin and an emphasis on the development of personal holiness in general, "which is an aspect of the middle-class piety the cult sought to address".[81] Later Anne was also seen as an educator, who in many images teaches her daughter to read from the Scriptures (in which her destiny is written), as in the painting of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *The Virgin and St. Anne*, c. 1655[82] and, as mentioned, in the case of the statue in St. Anne Cathedral, Leeds, UK, which I have seen.

To conclude the chapter, St. Anne's cult—and the visual representations that made the saint popular—circulated in the South-North direction, through artists, scribes, travellers for various purposes, and pilgrims,[83]as well as through the participants in the crusades. At observed before and we shall see again in Chap. 8, the visual representation of *Anna lactans* alone, travelled from Constantinople to insular Greece, to Mount Athos and the Peloponnese archipelago (Mistra), Ohrid, Prespa, and the Orestiada lakes, to Venice. Other types of representations of Anne were specific to Eastern,[84] Central,[85] and Northern Europe,[86] and some of them

[81] Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, p. 38. See also Dominicus van Gelre and Dorlandus, *The Legenda sanctae Annae*.

[82] Warner, in *From the Beast to the Blonde* reproduces this painting on p. 80.

[83] Beda Kleinschmidt, *Die heilige Anna. Ihre Verehrung in Geschichte, Kunst und Volkstum*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde, Heft 1–3, Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1930, pp. 78–79.

[84] In addition to the mentioned fresco in Cozia Monastery, Wallachia (1390), an icon (on wood) exists in Bistrița Monastery, Moldavia. According to tradition it was donated by Eirene-Ana, the wife of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel ll Paleologue to Ana, the wife of Prince Alexander the Good in 1401.

[85] For instance, Dana Stehlíková, *The Holy Breast of St Anne, relics and reliquaries in mediaeval Prague*.

[86] Elina Räsänen, "Late Medieval Wood Sculptures as Materialized Saints: the Embodiment of Saint Anne in Northern Europe", in *Studies in art history*, Helsinki, 2010, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 51–65 Nixon, *Mary's Mother*.

existed even in medieval Rus', even though it seems that their number in the lands of the latter was surprisingly low. (As far as I know, no research focused on St. Anne has been undertaken in Russia. I have found a fresco representing the saint in the Church of St. Michael in Kiev,[87] which was built and decorated in the twelfth century; the Ukraine constitutes the most western part of the lands of the Rus'—closer to the countries in which Anne's relics were—therefore it is no surprise to see her depicted in that place; one would have rather expected more visual renderings of her.) (Fig. 5.1).

After the works of Ernst Schaumkell[88] and Paul-Victor Charland[89] in the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, there was no major publication about the saint until Nixon's book. But in contemporary scholarship St. Anne has gradually become more important if one considers, as noted, the newest studies dedicated to her by Marina Warner, Elina Räsänen, and Eirini Panou. Moreover, St. Anne's College within the University of Oxford has a rich collection of material concerning this saint. I organised a workshop on St. Anne for the International Congress of Medieval Studies in Leeds in July 2013—the city's cathedral

[87] St. Anne is represented in St. Michael Chapel from Saint Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kiev. The first church on that place (dedicated to St. Demetrius) was erected either by Prince Iziaslav Yaroslavych, whose Christian name was Demetrius, in the 1050s or by his son, Sviatopolk II Michael Iziaslavych, half a century later. He is recorded as commissioning a monastery church (1108–1113) dedicated to his own patron saint, Michael the Archangel. One reason for building the church may have been Svyatopolk's victory over the nomadic Polovtsians, as Michael the Archangel was considered a patron of warriors and victories; see Titus D. Hewryk, "The Lost Architecture of Kiev", New York: Ukrainian Museum, 1982.A church in Voroniv (also in the contemporary Ukraine) that is in the process of being erected will be dedicated to "the Nativity of The Blessed Virgin"; see http://voroniv.in.ua/english-version (Retrieved 4 March 2014). This is situated in a settlement on the border with Poland dating to the fifteenth century; on the history of this place, see Yoroslav Levkun, "Village of starks and golden wheat", *Chronicle of the land*, Snyatyn: Rod Print, 2003, where there is a reproduction of a document from 1755 entitled "The privilege of owner Nicholas Potocki of Nezvysk Church land"; there the villages of Voroniv and Nezvyscka are mentioned together.

[88] *Der Kultus der heilegen Anna am Ausgange des Mittelalters* [The cult of St. Anne at the end of the Middle Ages], Freiburg: Br. & c., 1893.

[89] Paul V. Charland (ed.), *Madame saincte Anne et son culte au moyen age*, Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, vols. 1–2, 1911, 1913; *Le patronage de sainte Anne dans les beaux-arts*, Quebec: Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, 1923; *Les trois légendes de Madame Saincte Anne*, Québec: Pruneau & Kirouac, vols. 1–3, 1898.



Fig. 5.1 *Saint Anne with the Virgin*, attributed to Angelos Akotantos, second quarter of the fifteenth century; egg tempera on wood primed with gesso on linen, gold leaf; 106×76 cm, Candia, Crete; now in Benaki Museum, Athens; inv. No. 2998 (Maria Vassilaki (ed.), *The Hand of Angelos: an icon-painter in Venetian Crete*, the catalogue of an exhibition with the same title organised in November 2010–January 2011, Farnham: Ashgate, and Athens: Benaki Museum, 2010, pl. 44, p. 190, caption. 191.) The brilliant colour evokes an awareness of the profound sanctity implicit in the composition. A faked signature assumed to be that of Emmanuel Tzanes and the date 1637 were added on the icon at the beginning of the twentieth century. During the recent cleaning and conservation of the icon, it was decided to keep this inscription as evidence of the preferences shown by collectors in those days (© The Archives/Alamy Stock Photo and ©2018 Benaki Museum, Athens; for Benaki the photographer is Leonidas Kourgiantakis)

is dedicated to this saint. The organisers were happy to have a session dedicated to Anne.

The next two chapters will present literary and visual expressions referring to the connection between the biological and spiritual as embodied in the act of child breastfeeding, through the example of Anne and her daughter.

CHAPTER 6

St. Anne as the Prototype of a Saint Connected with Healing and Milk Nourishing: Introducing Various Additional Textual Sources, Including the Apocrypha

6.1 Selected Mainstream Christian Literature About Anne Breastfeeding Her Daughter

Among the texts referring to milk and breastfeeding in regard to Anne are, as mentioned earlier, the writings of Romanos Melodos/the Melode (c. 490–c. 556). He celebrates in a liturgical context the miracle of St. Anne overcoming her sterility, that is, in the refrain of his hymn written in order to honour the birth of the Virgin: "The barren woman gives birth to the Mother of God and the nurse of our life."[1] He also mentions the breastfeeding of Mary by Anne, who joyfully thanks God:

> Who hath visited me and taken away from me the reproach of mine enemies, and the Lord hath given me a fruit of his righteousness … Hearken, hearken, ye twelve tribes of Israel that Anne giveth suck.[2]

[1] St. Romanus, *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica*, edited by Paul Maas and Constantine Athanasius Typanis, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963, p. 276. 6–7; Marjorie Carpenter (ed. and trans.), *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*, Columbia, MO: Columbia University Press, vol. 1, 1970, p. 304.

[2] P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis (eds.), *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica genuina*, 276. 6–7, 280. 6–7. As shown, the work was translated and edited by M. Carpenter as *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*, Columbia, Miss.: vols. 1–2, 1970–1973.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_6

Romanos does not tell us the source of his information, but the words of his hymns sound very similar to those from the *Protoevangelion*, which will become evident later in the book. Byzantine homilists popularised the life of Mary's ancestors from the eighth century onwards.[3]

In a homily on the Nativity of the Holy Theotokos St. John of Damascus (c. 675–749) exclaimed, addressing Anne:

> O breasts that suckled her who fed the One who feeds the world!
> O marvel of marvels and miracle of miracles!
> For it was necessary that the ineffable and condescending Incarnation of God should be prepared by means of miracles![4]

He also addresses Mary as she was nurtured by Anne: "O most holly little daughter you were nourished on breast-milk and surrounded by angels!"[5] St. Gregory Palamas (1296–1357) affirms that Mary "was presented to the temple having been taken from her mother breast only a day or two before".[6]

Also in his Homily IX, Patriarch Photius (858–867, 877–886) provides details from the life of Mary's mother and is happy to imply that in the relationship of human being and God, nothing is impossible; St. Anne's tale was the example he employed to illustrate this. He marvels:

> How can dried-up breasts gush with streams of milk? For if old age is unable to store away blood, how can the teats whiten into milk which they have not received?[7]

[3] M. B. Cunningham, in the *Wider than the Heaven*, and "The Use of the *Protevangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God", pp. 167–174, presents some of these homilies and their authors.

[4] John of Damascus, *In Nativitatem B. V. Mariae*, PG 96, 672D; *Homily on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary*, ed. B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, PTS 29, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, vol. 5, 1988, p. 170; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, p. 55 (with some changes).

[5] John of Damascus, *In Nativitatem B. V. Mariae*, PG 96, 672B; *Homily on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary*, ed. B. Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, p. 170; trans. Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, p. 55.

[6] Saint Gregory Palamas, *Mary the Mother of God*, edited by C. Veniamin, pp. 1–47. See also Émile De Strycker, *La Forme la Plus Ancienne Du Protevangile de Jacques. Recherches sur le papyrus Bodmer 5 avec une édition critique du texte grec et une traduction annotée. En appendice: Les version arméniennes traduites en latin par Hans Quecke* (Subsidia hagiographica 33), Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1961, p. 94.

[7] Photius/Photíos, "Homily IX: Of the Same Most-Blessed Patriarch Photius, Archbishop of Constantinople, Homily on the Nativity of our Most-Holy Lady, the Mother of God", in

Later on he celebrates with joy the miraculous conception by the elderly Anne and the provision of milk from her barren breasts, because the Patriarch regards the birth of the Virgin as the origin of salvation for humankind:

> Today Anna is shorn of the reproach of sterility, and the world reaps the crop of joy. […] Today the Virgin comes forth from a sterile womb […] What a miracle! When the time of sowing had passed, then came the moment of bearing fruit. When the flame of desire had been extinguished, then the torch of childbearing was lit. Youth did not produce a flower, yet old age puts forth a shoot.[8]

(In parenthesis, we should notice that Ephrem the Syrian, c. 306–373, in a similar context, reproduces the praising and joyful exclamation of St. Elizabeth, "the barren woman" as he calls her, for being granted as a gift the capacity to nourish a child. It was addressed to the Mother of God: "Who hath granted me the sight of thy Babe, O Blessed One, by Whom the heaven and earth are filled! Blessed be thy Fruit which made the barren vine to bear a cluster."[9] Also, James of Kokkinobaphos (the Monk), twelfth century, reflects the same delight in his sermons about Elizabeth and her giving birth to the Baptist; an early twelfth-century manuscript now in the Vatican Library (MS Vat. Gr.1162; on fol.159r) depicts the saint breastfeeding her son according to the description Kokkinobaphos gave in his *Homily on the Betrothal of the Mother of God*[10].)

C. Mango (ed. and trans.), *The Homilies of Photius Patriarch of Constantinople*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958, pp. 166–167; see also B. Laoúrdas (ed.), *Omiliai*, Thessaloniki, 1959, p. 91.

[8] Photius, "Homily lX", p. 166.

[9] Ephrem the Syrian/Morris, "Rhythms of Saint Ephrem the Syrian. Hymn 'Rhythm' the Fourth", pp. 30–31. And in Ephrem the Syrian, "Hymn on the Nativity 4", in *Hymns*, K. E. McVey (trans.).

[10] James of Kokkinobaphos, "Oration in S. Deiparae Desponsationem/ Homily on the Betrothal of the Mother of God", in the "Homilies on the Mother of God", *PG* 127. 696A. *Homilies of James the Monk* in the MS Vat. Gr. 1162, fol. 159r. Cutler has a black and white reproduction of f. 159r from the MS Gr. 1162 in "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy", pp. 166 (fig. 4), and comments about it on pp. 175–176. The manuscript depicts scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist. On p. 175, n. 37, Cutler shows that the corresponding miniature in Paris, B. N. Gr. 1208, is "essentially identical" to the image from the Bibliotheca Vaticana. See also C. Stornajolo, *Miniature delle Omilie di Giacomo Monaco e dell'evangeliario gr. Urbinate*, Rome: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1910. pl. 67.

In parallel developments, apocryphal writings offer information about Anne suckling her child (and also about her husband, Joachim) especially through what is known as (Mary's and Jesus's) infancy narratives: the already-mentioned *Protoevangelion of James* (henceforth mostly referred to as *PJ*),[11] the *Pseudo-Matthew*,[12] and their variants.[13]

6.2 Apocryphal Texts About Anne Breastfeeding Her Daughter

I will present here the manuscript tradition of the apocryphal texts just mentioned, especially that of the *Protoevangelion*, not only because it is very rich but also because an exhaustive updated survey of it has not recently been done. And most importantly in the context of a book on spiritual nourishment and milk, *PJ* and *Pseudo-Matthew* are especially useful as they refer to St. Anne breastfeeding the child Mary. Various works discuss the *Protoevangelion* and pay attention to the treatment this text received in the Byzantine Empire, but they do not go into details with regard to the history of the document and do not always mention its variants. While in this chapter I intend to discuss about *Pseudo-Matthew* because it has been less studied and also comment on other apocryphal texts about Mary's infancy, the—*Protoevangelion* will still be scrutinised. We shall do so because, generally speaking, hagiography is not substantially documented, and therefore every existing piece must exhaustively be made use of.

6.2.1 The **Protoevangelion**

In the current chapter, various redactions of the *Protoevangelion* are introduced, and its content is compared with that of related sources. As the

[11] James Keith Elliott (ed.), *The Apocryphal of the New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation based on R.M. James*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 49; Émile Amann, *Le Protévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins. Introduction, textes, traduction et commentaire*, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1910.

[12] "Pseudo-Matthaei" in Jan Gijsel and Rita Beyers (eds.), *Libri de nativitate Mariae. Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium*, Turnhout: Brepols, Series 9, 1997. See also J. Gijsel, "Nouveaux témoins du *pseudo-Matthieu*". *Saeris Erudiri* 41, Tumhout: Brepols, 2002, pp. 273–300.

[13] "Libri de nativitate Mariae" in Jan Gijsel and Rita Beyers (eds.), *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, Brepols, Turnhout, Series 10, 1997. Both volumes are in *Corpus Christianorum. Series Apocryphorum*, Turnhout: Brepols.

work has not been particularly analysed with focus on *Anna lactans/Gal aktotrophousa*'s presence in the text, in addition to what I mentioned above, I will specially look at it from this perspective. What is to be strongly emphasised is the fact that most of the thinkers preoccupied with the writings referring to the childhood of the Virgin that constitutes the origin of Anne and Joachim's cult believe that they have a common source. To mention two examples of authors who come from different backgrounds and epochs, Origen[14] and Adolf von Harnack[15]; they both consider that to be "The Book of James" [which is different from the canonical Epistle of James]. Adolf Hilgenfeld advances the ideas that a Gnostic version of the "The Life of Mary" was that possible common text; he opines that it could be reconstructed from the extant variants of the Virgin's vita.[16]

Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne in the past,[17] as well as David R. Cartlidge[18] and J. Keith Elliott[19] and other researchers now, speaks about a geographical specialisation in the use of literature regarding Mary's birth and infancy, where Anne is included[20]: the *Protoevangelion* (6:3, 3.1–4.2, etc.) for Eastern Christendom and *Pseudo-Matthew's Gospel* for its Western part,[21] where it seems that other variants of these two texts existed. We shall come across more opinions on this issue later. The efforts Cartlidge and Elliott made to bring these two books into attention again,

[14] Origen, "Commentarius in Matthaeum" PG 13 X 877A-878D.

[15] Adolf von Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Literatur bis Eusebius* l (Band I. Die Chronologie der Litteratur bis Irenäus), Leipzig: Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1897, 600–603.

[16] Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Evangelien Justus*, Halle, 1904, pp. 153–161. See also De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne*, 1964, pp. 10–11 where he comments on Hilgenfeld's classification.

[17] Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident*, Brussel: Palais des Académies, 1964, 1992; vol. 1 (out of 2), p. 15.

[18] David R. Cartlidge and James Keith Elliott, *Art & Christian Apocrypha*, London, New York: Routledge, 2001.

[19] J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2005.

[20] David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, London, New York: Routledge, 2001, 33.

[21] Jan Gijsel and Rita Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae. Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew: Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium. Textus et Commentarius & Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae. Textus et Commentarius* (French & Latin), Turnhout: Brepols (Series Apocryphorum vols. 9–10), 1997.

especially after Montague Rhodes James's translation of them in 1924[22] (and on which the latter two researchers based their own), are to be commended.

The *Protoevangelion* was believed to have been the script of Jesus's brother by, among others, Guillaume Postel[23] and Michael Neander[24] on the basis of a short epilogue in which the author calls himself James and says that he wrote the text during the unrest that followed Herod's death.[25] He actually would have been Christ's half-brother, according to Origen[26] because he was supposedly Joseph's child from a previous marriage. Émile Amman,[27] Johann Albert Fabricius,[28] and Émile De Strycker[29] indicate that the attribution of the work to that particular person is impossible

[22] Montagues Rhodes James (trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses with other narratives and fragments newly translated by Montague Rhodes James*, Oxford, at the Oxford, et al.: Clarendon Press Oxford University Press, 1985 edition (first edition 1924).

[23] Guillaume Postel, *De nativitate Mediatoris ultima, nunc future et toti orbi terrarium in singulis ratione praeditis manifestanda, opus: In Quo Totius naturae obscuritas, origo & creatio*, Basel: Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 1053310, [S. n.]1547. The copy existent in The Bavarian State Library, publisher Johann Oporinus, was digitalised and uploaded online in 2009. Postel translated it from Greek.

[24] Michael Neander (trans.), *Protoevangelion sive de natalibus Iesu Christi, et ipsius matris virginis Mariae, somo historicus divi Iacobis minoris, consobrini and fratris Domini Iesu, apostoli primarii, et episcopi christianorum primi Hierosolmys Evangelica historia, quam scripsit beatus Marcus … Vita Ioannis Marci evangelitae, collecta ex probatoribus autoribus, per Theodorum Bibliandrum. Indices … concinnati per eundem*. This Latin version was edited by Theodorus Bibliander and published by Johann Oporinus, Basel, 1552. *Protoevangelium Iacobi* constitutes entry 254 in J. M. de Bujanda, *Index des Livres Interdits. Index d'Anvers*, 1569, 1570, 1571, Geneva: Centre d'Ėtudes de la Renaissance, Ėditions de l' Université de Sherbrooke, Librairie Droz and Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1988, 1984, p. 217. Another edition was published in Strasbourg by Josias Rihel, 1570.

[25] De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, pp. 6. 8–9.

[26] Origen, *In Matthaeum*, X 17 (Klosterman, X, pp. 21, 26–29); *Protoevangelion* lX, 2; XVll 1–2; XVlll, 1 (in De Strycker's edition: 19: 13–14, 35: 8–9, 36: 1, 37: 11–12).

[27] Émile Amman, *Le Protoévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins. Introduction, texts, traduction et commentaire (Les apocryphes du Nouveau Testament)*, Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1910, pp. 74, 150–151; De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangiles*, p. 41, footnote 3.

[28] Johann Albert Fabricius, *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti Sumptu viduae* (1743); Sumptu viduae B. Schilleri and J. C. Kisneri; online by Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2007.

[29] De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, footnote 3 on p. 41, pp. 371 ff.

because this is a latter text, and there is no other document to endorse the statement he makes.[30] In Lafontaine-Dosogne's view, the *Protoevangelion* was written in the second century and indeed influenced the creation of what has been called the *Pseudo-Matthew Gospel*.[31] The fact that Origen mentions a "Book of James" might be considered a support to her dating. However, on the basis of palaeographic criteria, De Strycker affirms that it was penned in the third century with some parts (Apology of Phileas and Psalms 33–34—*g* and *h* in his classification) belonging to the early fourth century.[32]

The title is a relatively modern one: it was given by Neander in the sixteenth century.[33] According to Lafontaine-Dosogne, it was Postel who gave this name to the previously known "Book of James" in 1562, but actually, as noticed earlier (in n. 45), Neander is the author of the Latin rendering (from Greek) *Protoevangelion sive de natalibus Jesu Christi et ipsius Matris virginis Mariae, sermo historicus divi Jacobi minoris*.[34] This endeavour was completed in 1552, and through such a designation its author seems to have intended to imply that the contents of the *PJ* were older than those of the Gospel. Ms. *Parisinus gr. 1468* has the original Greek manuscript as Γέγγηαις Μαρίας τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ὑπερεγδόξου μητρὸς Ἰηαοῦ Χριστοῦ.[35] After many debates as to what the *Protoevangel of James* was supposed to contain, Adolf von Harnack concludes, unchallenged to the best of our knowledge, that there are three constitutive elements of this document: (1) The Book of Mary, (2) *Apocryphum Josephi de nativitate Jesu et de virginitate Mariae in partu et* post partum, and (3) Apocryphum Zachariae.[36]

[30] J. A. Fabricius, *Codex apocryphus* enlists the names of the authors from the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries who underline the impossibility of such an attribution, pp. 53–65. See also De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, p. 6.

[31] Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, p. 15.

[32] De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, pp. 14, 22.

[33] Neander, *Protoevangelion sive de natalibus Jesu Christi et ipsius Matris virginis Mariae*. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, p. 15.

[34] Neander (trans.), *Protoevangelion sive de natalibus Iesu Christi*.

[35] Lafontaine-Dosogne *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, pp. 15–16. She mentions as an important contribution to the study of Mary's life the work of Constantin von Tischendorf (ed.), *Evangelia apocrypha: adhibitis plurimis codicibus Graecis et Latinis maximam partem nunc primum consultis atque ineditorum copia,* Lipsiae, 1876; there is a second edition Hildesheim, New York: Zurigo, 1876.

[36] A. Harnack, *Die Chronologie…*, pp. 600–603.

The apocryphal has been very well preserved on *Papyrus Bodmer V*, known to scholars as P75[37]; here the title of the text is given as *The Birth of Mary: The Revelation of James.* J. K. Elliott rightly appreciates that "The second half of the title is patently unsuitable, as *PJ* is in no sense apocalyptic. Even the first half is not entirely accurate because much more is related than Mary's birth. Variations of this title occur in other manuscripts."[38] In January 2007, Frank J. Hanna III donated to the Vatican Library the precious Bodmer Papyrus XIV–XV that was previously kept at the Biblioteca Bodmeriana in Cologny, Switzerland.

Originally this document contained the complete Gospels according to Luke and John, in that order; it also included Luke's version of the *Lord's Prayer* (Luke 11, 1–4). About half of each Gospel has survived until today in reasonable condition. For certain passages, such as John 6, 12–16, this is the oldest surviving document in the world. It is also the earliest manuscript to preserve on a single page the passage from the end of one Gospel to the beginning of the next, thus providing the earliest direct evidence for the order of the books in the Bible.

In addition to Bodmer V there is another early manuscript (from the fourth century) containing a part dedicated to Mary's birth; this is a papyrus which today is to be found in Florence; Ermenegildo Pistelli worked on it.[39] The rest of the manuscripts on this topic—implicitly on St. Anne—belongs to the eighth–ninth centuries. Of the surviving Greek manuscripts, the most complete text is a tenth-century codex in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Paris 1454). Most of the manuscripts are included in the comprehensive classification De Strycker made to *Evangelia apocrypha* that is based partially on Constantin von Tischendorf's, as well as on other scholars' dating; he also included some much later manuscripts in his list.[40]

Supplementary to the original Greek texts of the *Protoevangelion*, several oriental versions have also been discovered, the oldest one being in Syriac. This latter version, translated by Agnes Smith Lewis—*Apocrypha Syriaca: the Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae*[41]—had as its

[37] De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, pp. 14, 22.

[38] Elliott (ed.), *The Apocryphal of the New Testament*, p. 49.

[39] Ermenegildo Pistelli, *Pubblicazioni della Società italiana per la ricerca dei papyri*, Papiri greci e latini l, Firenze, 1912, pp. 9–15.

[40] De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, pp., 30–33; von Tischendorf, (ed.), *Evangelia apocrypha*.

[41] Agnes Smith Lewis (ed. and trans.), "Apocrypha Syriaca: the Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae", in *Studia Sinaitica*, no. 11, London, 1902. Actually, the full title of

source a palimpsest bought by the scholar in Suez in 1895.[42] Its most recent layer of writing consists in the works of the Fathers of the Church (Athanasius and John Chrysostom, among others) translated in Arabic in the ninth–tenth centuries; the apocryphal texts have been dated by Smith Lewis to the second half of the fifth century.[43]

Elliott, in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, summarises the situation of the *Protoevangelion* from some points of view, including that of its translation: "The influence of *PJ* was immense, and it may be said with some confidence that the developed doctrines of Mariology can be traced to this book. Together with the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, *PJ* influenced other and later birth and childhood gospels as *Pseudo-Matthew* and the Arabic, Armenian, and Latin infancy traditions. It seems to have been a popular book, and over 100 extant Greek manuscripts, some of them dating from the third century, contain all or part of *PJ*. Translations were made into Syriac, Ethiopic, Georgian, Sahidic, Old Church Slavonic, Armenian, and presumably into Latin—in so far as *PJ* was apparently known to the compiler of the Gelasian Decree."[44] Gelasius I, bishop of Rome and the presumptive author of the above-mentioned document issued sometime between 492 and 496 (the dates of this pope's rule), knew the *PJ* and, in consequence of disapproving its content, condemned it.[45] In the literature on the Nativity Gospels it is written that there is no complete extant Latin version of the *Protoevangelion*. The reason Elliott offers for this unavailabil-

this document is *Apocrypha Syriaca: the Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae*: *with texts from the Septuagint, the Corân, the Peshiṭta, and from a Syriac hymm in a Syro-Arabic palimpsest of the fifth and other centuries.*

[42] De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, p. 35–36.

[43] A. Smith Lewis (ed. and trans.), "Apocrypha Syriaca", p. X.

[44] J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 48.

[45] In the surviving manuscripts the so-called *Decretum Gelasianum* or Gelasian Decree exists on its own and also appended to a list of theological books declared to be "canonical" by a Council of Rome under Pope Damasus I, bishop of Rome between 366 and 383. That record contains a quotation from Augustine written in about 416. The rules recorded in the *Incipit Concilium Verbis Romae sub Damaso Papa de Explanatione Fidei,* the so-called Damasine List, are the same as those contained in the Council of Carthage's Canon 24, 415 AD. The *Decretum* has several parts: the second is a catalogue of rules, and the fifth part is a catalogue of the apocrypha and other writings that were to be rejected (Acts of Philips, Gospel of Barnabas, Passion (sic) of St. George, Acts of Thecla and Paul, etc.). The catalogue of tenets records 26 books of the New Testament (Parts 1, 3, and 4 are not relevant to the respective collection).

ity is thus: "The absence of surviving early Latin translations may be explained on two grounds. First, *PJ* was prohibited in the West because of its teaching about Joseph's first marriage. Secondly, the parallel development of Latin infancy gospels such as *Pseudo-Matthew* and *De Nativitate Mariae* (both of which were commended by introductory letters attributed to Jerome, who had denounced *PJ*) as well as the story of Joseph the Carpenter and the *Liber de Infantia*, all of which were based on *PJ*, obviated the need for its survival in Latin, as these other writings served to satisfy the same needs."[46] I am not sure that this is the case; in any event, many remains from the *PJ* in Latin have been preserved. Concerning the incomplete pieces, Elliott himself[47] and De Strycker[48] mention the *Barbarus Scaligeri* (or *Excerpta latina Barbari*), today identified as Paris. Lat. 4884, which has inserted within some fragments of the *Protoevangelion*; only 50 lines are included, but since the chronicle was written just after the year 412 and the respective excerpts were included from the outset, these are very valuable. The *Barbarus Scaligeri* is the Latin version of an *Alexandrine Chronicle* (written around 412 with additions made in 476–518).[49] De Strycker mentions another fragmentary version of the *Protoevangelion* included in the *Latin Infancy Gospels* edited by M. R. James, and Émile Amman published a collection of Latin fragments.[50]

Also, just before the publication (in 1961) of De Strycker's book that constitutes an inventory recording its most ancient forms, José Antonio Aldama discovered some excerpts of a Latin version of the text in ms. Paris B. N. ne Acq. Lat. 718.[51] They came from a Breviary (bréviaire) dated to the fourteenth century that belonged sometimes to the Benedictine Abbey of Soyons (Ardèche).[52] The fragment written on folios 159r–161r contains 12 lessons, each followed by an answer. They were intended to be read during the Matins service on the Conception of Mary feast.[53] Among

[46] Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 48.

[47] Idem, pp. 39–40, 54.

[48] De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile,* 13, 39.

[49] De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile,* pp. 39–40, 363–371; von Tischendorf, (ed.), *Evangelia apocrypha*, pp. 1–2.

[50] É. Amman, *Le Protoévangile de Jacques et ses remaniements latins.*

[51] José Antonio Aldama, "Fragmentos de una versón latina del Protoevangelio de Santiago", pp. 63–74.

[52] James (ed. and trans.) 1924; De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, pp. 40–41; 364–367.

[53] J. A. Aldama 1962; De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, pp. 50, 367–371.

the documents in this collection, there is a section from a Gospel of which the ninth part consists of lessons drawn from the *Protoevangelion*. One of these lessons has the title *Sermo historicus sancti Iacobi fratris Domini in generationem sanctae Dominatricis nostrae Dei matris et semper virginis.* De Strycker appreciates that this document is of great interest because its content is similar to that of the manuscripts from the group Gr. BIMNPR.[54] This might show that their common source was a copy of the *Protoevangelion* in Greek. The way in which the title of the lesson was formulated indicates that it refers to a complete copy. Judging by its size, the document discussed by Aldama cannot be earlier than the ninth century. Therefore, there is a high probability that at least a Latin version of the *PJ* existed before the sixteenth century when Postel and Neander did their translations and printed editions came out.

Later, translations were made in modern languages—certainly in German,[55] Italian,[56] Russian,[57] and Romanian.[58] Albert Frey and a team are working on a critical edition that will make use of versions in other languages that will be published in the Corpus Christianorum Apocryphal Text Series.

6.2.2 Pseudo-Matthew

Commencing now the analysis of *Pseudo-Matthew* (*Ps. Matthew*),[59] as indicated, literature underlines that it has mainly been used as a source

[54] Abbé V. Leboquais, *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France,* lll, Paris, 1934; pp. 400–404. See also De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, pp. 367–369.

[55] Eberhard Nestle, “Ein syrisches Bruchstück aus dem Protevangelium Jacobi”, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 3:1 (1902): 86–87; Eduard Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin 23, Berlin: A. Asher & Co, 1899.

[56] Ermenegildo Pistelli, *Protevangelo di Jacopo; prima tradzione italiana con introduzione e note di Ermenegildo Pistelli. Segue un’appendice dallo Pseudo-Matteo*, Lanciano: R. Carabba, 1919.

[57] J. S. Sventsitsky, M. K. Mills, *Апокрифы древних христиан: Исследование, тексты, комментарии*, Moscow: Russian Academy of Sciences, 1989.

[58] Simion Popescu-Liliacoveanu, “Protoevanghelia lui Iacob”, *Evangheliile apocrife*, Bucharest, 1922.

[59] Gijsel and Beyers, *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew & Libri de nativitate Mariae*, vol. 9, 19–20; 1997, vol. 10, p. 28; J. K. Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006, 2006: 6, 8, 12, 14.

of information regarding Anne in Western Christendom.[60] In the book *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* edited by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, it is stated so,[61] and Gijsel and Beyers[62] as well as Cartlidge and Elliott agree.[63] After specifying the exact locations within this apocryphal text where St. Anne occurs (1. 2, 2. 1–4, 3. 5, 4. 1, 5. 1), Cartlidge and Elliott comment on the fragments thus identified.[64] (They do the same with regard to the *Protoevangelion*.[65])

Ps-Matthew was written in the fourth or fifth century in Latin. Gijsel and Beyers highlight that it has never acquired the status of an apocryphal gospel in spite of the fact that sometimes it was thus called, and at the outset of the ninth century, when its diffusion began, it circulated as a legend.[66] The text differs from the *PJ* in respects which only concern peripheral details. For example, in the *Ps-Matthew*, the age at which Mary was entrusted to Joseph is specified (she was 14 years old); miracles happened during the flight to Egypt: dragons, lions, and other animals worshipped the baby Jesus, the palm trees bent over allowing the Holy Family to collect their fruits, and the idols shook when they entered Egypt, and so on. However, there are no discrepancies in regard to Mary's parents or to her upbringing. Ashley and Sheingorn go as far in emphasising the similarities between the two main apocryphal texts as saying that *Ps. Matthew* is the *PJ* "reworked into Latin".[67]

[60] Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, London, New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 33

[61] Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (eds.), "Introduction", *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, University of Georgia Press, Athens and London, 1990, p. 10.

[62] Gijsel and Beyers, *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew & Libri de nativitate Mariae*, vol. 9, pp. 19–20; vol. 10, p. 28.

[63] D. R. Cartlidge and J. K. Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha,* Routledge, London, New York, 2001, p. 33; Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, pp. 6, 8, 12, 14.

[64] Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, p. 33; Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*; Lewis (ed. and trans.), "Apocrypha Syriaca"; Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, pp. 15–16.

[65] Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha.*

[66] Gijsel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae. Gospel of pseudo-Matthew*, p. 20 and footnote 1 on p. 20.

[67] Ashley and Sheingorn (eds.), "Introduction", *Interpreting Cultural Symbols,* p. 10.

6.2.3 Variant Texts

With regard to the variants of both *PJ* and *Ps-Matthew*, as observed, various researchers—Adolf Hilgenfeld for instance[68]—believed that the inspiration for the two major apocrypha was an early Gnostic version of "The Life of Mary", which was also the basis of a few ancient texts about Mary's infancy. Additionally to this, another book on the life of the Virgin existed, which is known to have been written in the ninth century, sometime between 846 and 849 according to Cyrille D. Lambot,[69] or after 868–869 in Rita Beyers's opinion.[70] This is entitled "The Nativity of Mary" and was inspired by the *Pseudo-Matthew* as well as by the fictive correspondence transmitted through what is called "the textual form A" of this apocryphal work.[71] It is dedicated mainly to the Virgin's childhood and Anne's role in it. The book reflects Mary's image in accordance with Carolingian principles[72] and this fact aids in dating the document. What make *The Nativity of*

[68] Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Evangelien Justus*, Halle, 1850, pp. 153–161. See also De Strycker (ed.), *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, pp. 6–10 and pp. 10–11, where he comments on Hilgenfeld's ideas.

[69] Cyrille D. Lambot, "L'homélie du Pseudo-Jérôme sur l'Assomption et l'Évangile de la Nativité de Marie d'après une letter inédite d'Hincmar", *Revue bénédictine*, vol. 46, 1934, pp. 265–282.

[70] Rita Beyers, "*Libellus de Nativitate Sanctae Mariae*", in Gijsel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, p. 28.

[71] The "A" family of the *Pseudo-Matthew* apocryphal refers to the "textual form A" (with a few subgroups) of some manuscripts; this "family" is formed by manuscripts as those in Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, U 36 (1390), fols. 52rb–55rb from the eleventh century and A 271 (471) containing documents from various periods, including some from the fifth centuries attributed to Augustine; here *De Nativitate Mariae* is on fols. 91v–95v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, *lat.* 2674 fol. 64r–70r dated to the twelfth century. There also exists a "B" family of Pseudo-Matthew manuscripts with two subgroups; this category is more homogeneous than "A". For a comprehensive list of both A and B groups, see Gijsel and Beyers, *Libri de nativitate Mariae. Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, vol. 10, especially from p. 37 on.

[72] Gijsel and Beyers, *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew & Libri de nativitate Mariae*, vol. 9, pp. 19–21; vol. 10, p. 28. The Carolingian principles with reference to Mary could be summarised as follows: before anything else she is the Mother of God, and Christ's divinity confers on her a dignity which supplements her human motherhood. She is also a perpetual virgin. Therefore, it is justified to elevate her above the angels and to make her the first among the saints and also the "Queen of Heaven". Mary is as well the Intercession with her Son on behalf of the believers. Pascase Radbert, the best writer of the ninth century, thought she was born without the original sin. This was the time when the mariologic reflexion become a cult, and the thesis of the Virgin's Assumption was most central to theological

Mary different from the *Pseudo-Matthew* is the omission of references to the context in which Anne gave birth and "the absence of any dramatic or picturesque elements".[73] Lambot considers this document a creation of Pascase Radbert (c. 790–d. before 868). He found his arguments on information from an incomplete letter by d'Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims, but Gijsel and Beyers do not consider his case convincing.[74] Today *The Nativity of Mary* is usually published together with *The Protoevangelion of James* (more often) and also with the *Pseudo-Matthew*.

A Georgian *Life of the Virgin* was attributed to Maximus the Confessor by both Michel-Jean van Esbroeck[75] and Stephen Shoemaker[76]; therefore, in their opinion this book was a creation of the early seventh century. The work has been known to Georgian scholarship since 1912.[77] I doubt Maximus's authorship and implicitly its dating so early in history because Maximus himself never referred to it in any of his other writings; it is much more likely that the work belongs to the Middle Byzantine period since it shares characteristics with the *Life of the Virgin* by Epiphanios as well as those by Symeon the Metaphrast and John Geometres.[78] Philip Booth also

debates (the feast dedicated to it was the most important celebration vis-à-vis Mary in the ninth century). These principles were the subject of theological literature, poetry, and sometimes of polemics (see, e.g. the Ratramne de Corbie-Paschase Radbert controversy) in the Carolingian period.

[73] Gijsel and Beyer, *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* and *Libri de nativitate Mariae*, vol. 10, p. 27.

[74] D. C. Lambot, "L'homélie du Pseudo-Jérôme sur l'Assomption et l'Évangile de la Nativité de Marie d'après une letter inédite d'Hincmar", *Revue bénédictine*, vol. 46, 1934, pp. 265–282; Gijsel and Beyer 1997: 28–29.

[75] *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, ed. and trans. Michel-Jean van Esbroeck, CSCO, vols. 478–479, Scriptores Iberici 21–22, Leuven: Peeters, 1986. For the *Life* in earlier Georgian scholarship, see ibid. vol. 1 VIf.; S. Shoemaker, "The Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor: Its Authenticity (?) and Importance", *Scrinium* 2 (2006) 307–328, at 310–312; id. *The Life of the Virgin Mary. Maximus Confessor*, ed. and trans. With an Introduction by Stephen J. Shoemaker, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

[76] *The Life of the Virgin Mary. Maximus Confessor*, ed. and trans. S. J. Shoemaker.

[77] For the *Life* in earlier Georgian scholarship, see *Maxime le Confesseur: Vie de la Vierge*, ed. and trans. M. van Esbroeck, vol. 1 VIf.; S. Shoemaker, "The Georgian *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus the Confessor: Its Authenticity (?) and Importance", *Scrinium* 2 (2006) 307–328, at 310–312; and id. *The Life of the Virgin. Maximus Confessor*, "Introduction", especially pp. 2–3. Korneli Kekelidze discovered the text and he was against its attribution to Maximus.

[78] Three important written witnesses existed, all created (it seems) in the period *c*. 976–*c*. 990: the Georgian translation (*c*. 980–*c*. 990), John the Geometer's *Life of the Virgin*

refutes the attribution of the text to Maximus; he suggests that it might be a tenth-century production by an anonymous author.[79]

What is significant about all variants of Mary's birth and infancy in the framework of the present publication is that they share narratives concerning not only her own life but also those of Sts. Anne and Joachim in connection with her. As observed, certain minor variances exist among these writings; further instances can be noted, one of them being a discrepancy between the *PJ* and the Georgian *Life of Mary*, which consists in the fact that the latter does not reproduce all of Anne's lamentations that the former contains and does not recount Joachim's trip to the mountain; it only succinctly tells the story of the transition of Mary's parents from barrenness to fertility.

Cartlidge and Elliott have systematised the information about Mary's parents based on all documents known to them.[80] In doing so, they enable

(987–989), and Symeon the Metaphrast's *Life of the Virgin* (*c.* 976–*c.* 987). For Euthymius's translation at the end of the tenth century, see Shoemaker, *Georgian Life*, p. 2 and also van Esbroeck, "Euthyme l'Hagiorite: le traducteur et ses traductions", *Revue des études géorgiennes et caucasiennes* 4 (1988), pp. 73–107. On his various translations of Maximus's works, there are papers in T. Mgaloblishvili and L. Khoperia (eds.), *Maximus the Confessor and Georgia*, Bennet and Bloom, London, 2009. For John the Geometer's *Life*, see Antoine A. Wenger, *L'Assomption de la T. S. Vierge dans la tradition byzantine du VI*^{e} *au X*^{e} *siècle: Études et documents*, Archives de l'Orient Chrétien 5, Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1955, p. 193; Wenger reads a possible allusion to political events, 976–989, and perhaps a reference to the revolt of Bardas Phocas at *Life* 69–70, p. 193. The date of Symeon the Metaphrast's *Life* is not discussed in the literature, but see Christian Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization*, Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002, esp. p. 74. Shoemaker, *Georgian Life*, pp. 313f, uses the dates above to refute the suggestion of Simon C. Mimouni, "Vies de la Vierge: état de la question", *Apocrypha* 5 (1994), p. 220 n. 36 that Euthymius might depend on John the Geometer. It seems evident that all three authors mentioned at the beginning of this footnote had independent access to a shared model.

[79] Philip Booth, "On the *Life of the Virgin* attributed to Maximus Confessor", *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 66, no. 1, 2015, pp. 149–203. Stephen J. Shoemaker has published a lengthy reply to Booth's article; it is entitled "The (Pseudo?-) Maximus Life of the Virgin and the Byzantine Marian Tradition", *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, vol. 67, Pt. 1, April 2016, pp. 115–142. He concludes it by saying that the *Life of the Virgin* "was probably composed at Mar Saba or one of the other monasteries of Palestine, if not by Maximus, then by some other denizen of the Judaean desert"; p. 142.

[80] Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*; on pp. 29–30 they have drawn a table to illustrate in summary form the similarities and differences between the Eastern and Western apocryphal traditions with regard to Mary's infancy.

the reader to observe that the texts do not begin at the same point in what is called Eastern and Western Christianity and that they diverge on their interpretation of Zacharias's death. In the West they begin with the wedding of Joachim and Anne, while in the East the rejection of Joachim's offer marks the opening of the story regarding the lives of the two saints and that of Mary. The Western version states that Herod killed Zacharias in the Temple in a rage after both Mary and Elisabeth escaped with their children from his slaughter of the innocents. In Eastern Christendom, on Origen[81] and Basil of Caesarea's[82] line of thought, it is related that Zacharias was killed because after the Nativity he still allowed Mary to take her place among the virgins in the Temple. Otherwise, as said, the two traditions agree about the events surrounding the birth of Mary, certainly on the topic of Anna's sterility/child-bearing and on the suckling episode, when it is mentioned. We shall retain the main idea that all of them convey through Anne's exemplary maternity: there is an intrinsic anti-dualist dimension to this faculty of womanhood and implicitly to the act of breastfeeding.

Because of its importance in the context of our discussion, I now turn to the biography of Anna after her wedding; this is where we find the textual fragments that recount Mary's birth and her being breastfed. The apocryphal writings tell the story up to the moment when Anne and Joachim dedicate their daughter to the Temple.

6.3 What These Apocryphal Sources Say About Anne's Biography and the Events Leading to Mary's Birth?

St. Anne/Anna (Hanna in Syriac) and her husband Joachim (Yônakîr in Syriac) were a materially content couple beset by a constant sadness over not having children. However, this did not make them selfish or bitter. On the contrary, they were very generous: gave a third of their wealth "to the Temple, another third to the poor, orphans and widows, and kept for themselves and their household only a third". In the "Life of Mary" (*Mary 1–2*), their story unfolds thus:

[81] Origen, *Comm. Ser. in Matt.* 25 (Klostermann Xl, pp. 42, 14–43, 33).

[82] Basil the Great, "Homilia in Sanctam Christi Generationem/Sermon on the Holy Generation of Christ", PG 31. 1468 D–1469. A. P. Peeters mentions a few of the traditions regarding Zacharias's death. In *Acta Sanctorum*, lll, Brussels, 1910 (Nov.), pp. 1–11.

> "The blessed and very glorious Mary, ever-virgin, was born of royal lineage and of the family of David. She was born in the town of Nazareth and brought up in Jerusalem in the Temple of God. Her father was called Joachim and her mother Anna. The paternal home was originally in Galilee in the town of Nazareth; her mother's home irreproachable and charitable among men. They divided all their goods into three parts, dedicating one third to the Temple and its servants, another portion to pilgrims and the poor, with the other third reserved for themselves and their own domestic needs. Righteous before God and charitable to men, they lived a chaste married life for about twenty years without producing children. Nevertheless they made a vow that if God gave them a child they would dedicate it to the service of the Lord. For that reason they were in the habit of visiting the Temple of the Lord at every festival in the year."[83]

The *Pseudo-Matthew* 1–2, variant A, presents the story of the Biblical couple as follows: "In those days there was a man in Israel, Joachim by name, of the tribe of Judah. He was the shepherd of his own sheep, fearing the Lord in integrity and singleness of heart. He had no other care than that of his herds, from the produce of which he supplied with food all who feared God, offering double gifts in the fear of God to all who laboured in doctrine, and a single gift to those who ministered to him. Therefore his lambs, and his sheep, and his wool, and all the things he possessed, he used to divide into three portions: one he gave to the orphans, the widows, the pilgrims, and the poor; the second to those who worshipped God; and the third he kept for himself and his entire house. And as he did so, the Lord multiplied to him his herds, so that there was no man like him in the people of Israel. This now he began to do when he was fifteen years old. And at the age of twenty he took as wife Anne, the daughter of Achar, of his own tribe, that is, of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David. And though they had lived together for twenty years, he had by her neither sons nor daughters."[84] In Elliott's translation (which, as observed, brings the language of Montagues Rhodes James up to date) the story continues with the description of the character of Mary's parents: "In the 'Histories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel' Joachim was a very rich man and he brought all his gifts to the Lord

[83] J. K. Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity and Infancy Narratives*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006, Mary 1–2, p. 5.

[84] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Ps-Matthew 1–2, pp. 3–4.

twofold, saying: 'What I bring in excess shall be for the whole people, and what I bring as a sin-offering shall be for the Lord, as a propitiation for me'."[85] Was it a legal requirement or a social convention of that time to donate half or a third of one's riches to the Temple and the community? People were expected to support the Temple, but the ratio was usually a tenth from what they owned; Joachim and Anna donated more than other people around them. They lead an exemplary and temperate life.

Then this holy couple faced a crisis provoked by the rejection of Joachim's offering in the Temple on account of the couple's barrenness. In Elliott's *Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, it is narrated, "Now the great day of the Lord drew near, and the children of Israel were bringing their gifts. And Reuben, the scribe, stood up and said, 'It is not lawful for you to offer your gifts first, because you have begotten no offspring in Israel'." And, according to the same source, "[I]t happened that, in the time of the feast, among those who were offering incense to the Lord, Joachim, stood getting ready his gifts in the sight of the Lord. And the scribe, Ruben by name, coming to him, said: 'It is not lawful for you to stand among those who are doing sacrifice to God, because God has not blessed you so as to give you seed in Israel'."[86] In fragment C recorded in the above-mentioned synopsis, it is Issachar, the High Priest, who rejects Joachim's offering. In James's translation of the Apocryphal Gospels,[87] it is said: "Now the great day of the Lord drew nigh and the children of Israel offered their gifts. And Reuben stood over against him saying: It is not lawful for thee to offer thy gifts first, forasmuch as thou hast gotten no seed in Israel."[88] In the above *Synopsis* by Elliott, in the fragment "Mary

[85] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Ps-Matthew 1, p. 3. As noticed a few times, this translation follows closely *The Apocryphal New Testament being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses with other narratives and fragments newly translated by Montagues Rhodes James*, at the Clarendon Press/University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, and so on, 1985 edition (first edition 1924). The two translations only slightly and rarely diverge. It is easy to notice the updating of the language in Elliott's work if we compare, for example, the quotation in the text above with the following from *The Apocryphal New Testament* translated by James: "In the histories of the twelve tribes of Israel *it is written that* there was *one* Ioacim, exceeding rich: and he offered his gifts twofold, saying: That which is of my superfluity shall be for the whole people, and that which is for my forgiveness shall be for the Lord, for a propitiation unto me", p. 39.

[86] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Ps-Matthew 2b, p. 4.

[87] As stated, Elliott and James's translations of this text are close, but not identical.

[88] M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 39.

1–2", the story is given thus: "When the Feast of Dedication approached Joachim went up to Jerusalem with some of his kinsfolk. At that time Issachar was High Priest there. And when they saw that Joachim was there among his compatriots with his offering he rebuked him and refused his gifts, asking him why he dared to take his place among the fruitful when he was infertile. He told him that his offering was unworthy in God's sight, as God had not deemed him worthy of producing a descendent. Scripture said that everyone who did not produce a male child was cursed in Israel. That meant that he could release himself from his curse by producing a child; only then could he appear before God with his offerings. Filled with great shame by this reproach and the opprobrium it carried, Joachim retreated among the shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks in the pastures. Thus he did not wish to return home in case he was reproach by his kinsmen who had been present and who had heard the words of the priest."[89]

Anne also had her share of rejection. In the *Protoevangelion* there is mention of it thus: "And Anna was sore grieved [and mourned with a great mourning because she was reproached by all the tribes of Israel …]."[90] At about the same moment when her husband's offering was forbidden by the Temple [this coincidence was not highlighted anywhere, but it is implied in all apocryphal writings], Anne's handmaid reproached her for not having children. In different versions of the Apocryphal Gospels, the servant's name varies: she is Euthine/Eutine;[91] Salomee or, for the "Greeks", Judith[92] (Juthiné in French[93]); and Jônathîm for the Syrians.[94] Agnes Smith Lewis narrates the scene: "Jônathîm said to her 'What shall I say? Would that it were good! Behold, God hath withheld His mercy from thee, that thou mayest not yield fruit in Israel.'"[95]

[89] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Mary 1–2 C, pp. 4–5.

[90] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 39.

[91] The variant, Eutine, is indicated in a footnote on p. 5 in Elliott's *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*.

[92] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 38.

[93] De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile de Jacques*, pp. 69, 73.

[94] Agnes Smith Lewis (ed. and trans.), *Apocrypha Syriaca: the Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae* [The Protoevangelion of James and the Life of Mary], in: *Studia Sinaitica*, No. 11, London, 1902, pp. 1–2.

[95] Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca: the Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae*, p. 2.

All these happenings were a crucial, painful reminder of what had grieved them during their 20 years of marriage; they marked the reaching of a paroxysm in that particular moment with the realisation that, according to human experience and understanding, it was biologically impossible for Anna to give birth because she had passed the age of conception. The event in the temple made both Anna and Joachim react: he by checking the Records of the Twelve Tribes of Israel to verify whether he was the only man with no children mentioned there and, upon confirmation of this, by leaving for an extensive period (40 days) without telling his wife; she by mourning and lamentation.

Here, in Elliott's version, is the episode describing Joachim's reaction: "Then Joachim became very sad, and went to the record-book of the twelve tribes of the people and said: 'I will look in the register to see whether I am the only one who has not begotten offspring in Israel', and he found that all the righteous has raised up offspring in Israel. And he remembered the patriarch Abraham to whom in his last days God gave a son, Isaac. And Joachim was very sad, and did not show himself to his wife, but went into the wilderness; there he pitched his tent and fasted forty days and forty nights, saying to himself, 'I shall not go down either for food or for drink until the Lord my God visits me; my prayer shall be food and drink'."[96]

It is not clear why, after the incident within the Temple, he did not tell his wife that he was going to leave their home and go into the mountains. In any case, according to Elliott's translation of the *Protev.* 2–3, her husband's absence made Anna "sing two dirges and give voice to a twofold lament: 'I will mourn my widowhood,/and grieve for my childlessness'."[97] The *Protoevangelion* (in Elliott's translation) describes the saint's plight further: "And Ana sighted towards heaven and she saw a nest of sparrows in the laurel tree and she sang a dirge to herself":

> Woe is me, who gave me life.
> What womb brought me forth?
> For I was born a curse before them all and before the children of Israel,
> And I was reproached, and they mocked me and thrust me out of the Temple of the Lord.

[96] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Protoev. 3 B, pp. 4–5.

[97] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity* [Liber Flavus 2–5 (cf. "J" Compilation 1–4)] B, Protev. 2 B. Anna's laments, p. 5.

> Woe is me, to what am I likened?
> I am not likened to the birds of the heaven;
> for even the birds of the heaven are fruitful before thee, O Lord.[98]
> Woe is me, to what I am likened?
> I am not likened to these waters;
> for even these waters are fruitful before you, O Lord!
> Woe is me, to what I am likened?
> I am not likened to this earth?
> for even this earth brings forth its fruits in its season and praises you, O Lord.[99]

James's translation of the same episode in the story is very similar: "ll. 1. Now his wife Anna lamented with two lamentations, and bewailed herself with two bewailings, saying: I will bewail my widowhood, and I will bewail my childlessness."[100]

At this point in the apocryphal we come across an episode narrating the offering of a mysterious headband by the servant to Anne. The scene of which iconography we mentioned above is described in Elliott's version of the manuscript as follows: "Judith, her handmaid said 'How long do you intend to humble your soul, because the great day of the Lord is near, and it is not lawful for you to mourn? But take this headband, which the mistress of work gave me; it is not right for me to wear it because I am a servant and it bears a royal cipher.'"[101] It seems that by passing this object to her mistress the servant signalled that a change in Anne's status will happen: from a barren woman to a mother. (Unaware of this possible significance of Judith's gesture?), when hearing her offer, the saint expressed incredulity: "Get away from me! I shall never do it. The Lord has greatly humbled me. Who knows whether a deceiver did not give it [the band] to you and you have come to make me share in your sin."[102] But it seems that Judith was confident that Anne's acceptance of the object might have positive consequences. Moreover, she felt compassion for her mistress who had suffered greatly; she expresses her thoughts accordingly, probably also

[98] Some MSS. add "Woe is me, to what I am likened? I am not likened to the dumb animals; for even the dumb animals are fruitful before you, O Lord!"

[99] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Protoev. 2–3, variant C, p. 6.

[100] James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 38.

[101] Or "you have a royal appearance".

[102] Eliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, p. 5.

hoping beyond words, for a positive solution to the situation: "Why should I curse you?[103] The Lord has shut up your womb to give you no fruit in Israel."[104] In the Syriac (in its translation), the episode goes as follows: "When the day of the Lord drew near Jônathîm, the handmaid said to her, 'How long wilt thou humble thy soul? Behold, the great day of the Lord draweth nigh when it is not lawful to mourn. But take to thyself this headband, which my mistress gave me as my wages and bind thou it on. It is not lawful for me to bind it on because I am a maid-servant, and the sign of the Kingdom is upon it.'"[105]

The handmaid's sudden positive attitude was probably in part responsible for prompting a change of heart (and of apparel) also for Anne. After much prayer and crying, she "took off her mourning garments, washed her head, put on her bridal garments [or 'royal garments' in Syriac[106]], and about the ninth hour went into her garden to walk. And she saw a laurel tree and sat dawn beneath it and implored the Lord saying, 'O God of our fathers, bless me, and heed my prayer, just as you blessed the womb of Sarah, and gave her a son, Isaac'."[107]

While she was in the garden,[108] an angel appeared to the holy woman to deliver the good news (Fig. 6.1): "And behold an angel of the Lord appeared and said, 'Anna, Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer. You shall

[103] Variant adds "because you have not listened to me".

[104] Eliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, p. 5.

[105] Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, pp. 1–2.

[106] Smith Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca*, pp. 1–2.

[107] Eliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, p. 5.

[108] Theodore Hyrtakenos, "Εκφρασις εἱς τόν Παράδεισον πης Ἀγίσς Αννης πῆς μητρὸς′ της Θεοτόκου"/ "Description of the Garden of St. Anne and the Ekphrasis of Gardens", in Jean François Boissonade (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca*, Paris: Excusum in Regio Typographeo (5 vols. 1829–1833, reprinted Hildesheim, 1962), vol. 3, pp. 59–70. Mary-Lyon Dolezal and Maria Mavroudi, "Theodore Hyrtakenos' Description of the Garden of St. Anna and the Ekphrasis of Gardens", in Antony Littlewood, Henry Maguire, and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Byzantine Garden Culture*, published by Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection Washington, DC, 2002, p. 107 wrote about the images of Anne's Annunciation found in the two illustrated versions of James of Kokkinobaphos's homilies on the Virgin from the second quarter of the twelfth century mentioned above (Vatican Library, gr. 1162, and Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, gr. 1208), pp. 105–158. They say that the images "are far more evocative than his words", n. 7 on p. 107. An additional source on Anna's Annunciation, an anonymous encomium, survives in a fourteenth-century manuscript (Mt. Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, cod. 425). See F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca,* Brussels: Peeters, 1957, no. 1. 134d.



Fig. 6.1 The Prayer of St. Anne and the annunciation to her; mosaic from Chora Monastery/Kahriye Camii, c. 1310, Istanbul; personal photo, June 2015. (This illustration is documented in A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, Bollingen Series LXX/Pantheon Books, New York, 1966, vol. 1. pp. comments on pp. 64–65; image in vol. 2, pl. 85, pp. 92–95; 94 is colour, 93 and 95 details black and white; according to him the images date from c. 1316 to 1321)

conceive and bear, and your offspring shall be spoken of in the whole world.' And Anna said, 'As the Lord my God lives, if I bear a child, whether male or female, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it shall serve him all the days of its life'."[109]And the angel continues, "I am sent to you to tell you that you should give birth to a girl by the name of Mary who shall be blessed among all women. Full of the grace of the Lord from her birth she shall spend three years at home being sucked. Then, dedicated to the service of the Lord, she will not leave the Temple until her years of maturity."[110] In addition to above, iconographers imagined and represented these scenes as in following images:

[109] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Protoev. 4 B, p. 7.
[110] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Mary 3–5 A, pp. 10–11.

Joachim has his own annunciation in the mountains;[111] iconographers have represented the event, and a reproduction of this image exists in the book edited by Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Robert S. Nelson, *Approaching the Holy Mountain. Art and Liturgy at St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*.[112] Gaudenzio Ferrari (1544–1545) depicted the scene in a fresco that was recently transferred to canvas; today Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan hosts this masterpiece.

The reaction of Anne's husband was prompt and practical according to the *Protoevangelion*: "And Joachim went down and called his herdsmen and said, 'Bring me here ten female lambs without blemish and without spot; they shall be for the Lord my God. And bring me twelve tender calves and they shall be for the priests and council of elders, and a hundred young he-goats for the whole people.'"[113] Then, he started his way back to his wife; it took him and his shepherds 30 days to reach their home. Anne was waiting for him because the angel told her about his return: "[T]he angel of the Lord appeared to Anna, who was standing and praying, and said, 'Go to the gate which is called Golden, and meet your husband on the way, for to-day he will come to you'."[114] (*Ps-Matthew*) or, according to the *PJ*, "And behold there came two angels, who said to her, 'Behold Joachim you husband is coming with his flocks for an angel of the Lord had come to him and said to him, "Joachim, Joachim, the Lord God has heard your prayer. Go down from here; behold, your wife Anna shall conceive".'"[115] Eventually, Joachim met his wife and they went together to their home: "And, behold, Joachim came with his flocks, and Anna stood at the gate and saw Joachim coming and ran immediately and threw her arms around his neck saying, 'Now I know that the Lord God has greatly blessed me; for behold the widow is no longer a widow, and I, who was childless, shall conceive'. And Joachim rested the first day in his house."[116]

[111] Idem, *Ps-Matthew* 3B, pp. 8–9.

[112] Sharon E. J. Gerstel and Robert S. Nelson (eds.), *Approaching the Holy Mountain. Art and Liturgy at St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2010, p. 374; fig. 117. (Reproduced through the courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai.)

[113] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Protev. 4 B, p. 7.

[114] Idem, Ps-Matthew 3 B, p. 9.

[115] Idem, Protev. 4B, p. 7.

[116] Idem, Protev. 4 B, p. 8.

6.4 How the Apocryphal Sources Refer to Anne Breastfeeding the Infant Mary?

After that St. Anne gave birth to her daughter, at seven months in the sources employed by De Strycker, which favour the sacred significance of the number seven,[117] or at nine in Elliott's and all the others: "Anna brought forth a daughter and called her Mary."[118] Again: "her months were fulfilled; in the ninth month Anna gave birth. And she said to the midwife: 'What have I brought forth?' And she said, 'A female'. And Anna said, 'My soul is magnified this day'. And she lay (sic) down. And when the days were completed, Anna purified herself and *gave suck* to the child and called her Mary."[119] One should remember that the feast of Joachim and Anne does not celebrate the commemoration of their death, as in the case of other saints, but is connected to the birth of their child, whom Christians see as the supreme mediator for the salvation of their souls. The celebration of Mary's parents, on 9th September, one day after that of her daughter's Nativity, is entitled in calendars the "Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Synaxis of the Holy and Righteous Forbears of God, Joachim and Anna."[120]

Iconographers represented the episode of breastfeeding with some intensity in the period between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, as Chap. 7 will detail. St. Anne expressed continually her gratitude for the gift she received, in words and chants, as the narration, translated by Elliott, goes on to say: "And Anna sang this song to the Lord God: 'I will sing a hymn to the Lord my God,/for he has visited me and removed from me the reproach of my enemies/And the Lord gave me the fruit of his righteousness, unique yet manifold before him./Who will proclaim to the son[s] of Reuben that *Anna gives suck*.'"[121] The saint took care of Mary as any loving mother does; Joachim was also a tender father. Iconography expresses its interest in the dynamics of this affectionate family and depicts scenes that illustrate their feelings for each other.

117 De Strycker, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protoévangile*, pp. 87–88.

118 Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, Ps-Matthew, 4, 5, p. 12.

119 Idem, Protev. 5: 2 D, p. 12; emphasis added.

120 *Calendar and Lectionary* (Revised Julian style), The Fellowship of Saint John the Baptist, 2016, p. 31.

121 Idem, Protev. 5: 2 F, p. 13; emphasis added.

Beside the birth of their daughter, another notable event in the life of this saintly family described in the apocrypha is the anniversary of Mary's first birthday (Fig. 6.2). In the section dedicated to her upbringing in the book *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, it is related that on that occasion the entire community joined in the celebration. Mary's parents invited people, priests, scribes, and so on into their home. And they brought the daughter they cherished to the chief priest who was in attendance, and he prayed for Mary thus: "O God of the heavenly heights, look upon this child and bless her with a supreme blessing which cannot be superseded."

The text continues: "And her mother carried her into the sanctuary of her bedroom and *gave her suck*."[122] That was a new opportunity for Anne to offer a thanksgiving chant to the Lord God: "I will sing a hymn to the Lord my God,/for he has visited me and removed from me the reproach of my enemies/And the Lord gave me the fruit of his righteousness, unique yet manifold before him. Who will proclaim to the son of Reuben that Anna *gives suck*."[123]

In the image of the child Mary receiving the blessing of the priests from the fresco at Humor reproduced in Fig. 6.2, she is depicted together with Joachim, two priests, and a young man, probably a servant. Mary wears the *maphorion* (a broad dress that drapes over her shoulders) and her hands are open to receive the benediction. St. Joachim carries the child and his own hands are covered by his cloak as a sign of reverence towards the future Mother of God, whom he serves.[124] The sanctity of both Joachim and the child Mary is represented in the fresco by means of haloes. That is in contrast to the priests and the man attendant who are depicted without the nimbi. All characters in the scene are depicted fully and in semi-profile, in accordance with traditional (Byzantine-originated) iconography, which does not accept profile renderings of holy people (very rarely negative characters, as for instance Judas, can be represented as such). Fotis Kontoglou, a famous twentieth-century iconographer, states:

[122] J. K. Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, p. 13; emphasis added.

[123] Elliott, *A Synopsis of the Apocryphal Nativity*, p. 13; emphasis added.

[124] As a rule, in icons the covering of the hands is a sign of reverence which saints or angels manifest towards the Mother of God and Jesus Christ. Ouspensky and Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982, p. 165.



Fig. 6.2 The first celebration of Mary's birthday; the priests bless the child. A sequence from the iconographic cycle "Life of the Mother of God", walls of the *gropniţa* (burial chamber) of the church at Humor Monastery, Romania, 1535 (Balaban Bara, *The Political and Artistic Program of Prince Petru Rareş of Moldavia*, Annex 1, p. xxii.). The episode is also included in the Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162 (*Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1162,* fol. 46v, second quarter of twelfth-century, Rome, Vatican Library. The image from this document is reproduced in Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, vol. 1, fig. 75, p. 125.) (The image is used by permission from Dr. Adriana Balaban Bara; she included it herself in her chapter "The Lives of Joachim and Anne Depicted in the Church of Humor Monastery, Moldavia (Romania)" within the book edited by Elena Ene D-Vasilescu, *Devotion to St. Anne from Byzantium to the Middle Ages* (ed.), Palgrave, 2018, pp. 1–31)

> A spiritualized person cannot be depicted as incomplete, from his profile, because he has his soul filled with the glory of God and became in his wholeness light and likeness to God and this cannot be hidden. This is why the person (in iconography) turns entirely his face to the viewer.[125]

Another important moment in the cycle of Mary's childhood occurs when she takes her first—seven—steps. As mentioned, the number seven has a certain significance in apocryphal texts, as it has in other writings—it is the number of sanctity and perfection (this is the reason not only for the idea that Mary was born at seven months, as we have seen but also why in some sources even Jesus Christ was born at this term). I reproduce below the fragment from the *Protoevangelion* narrating the event, which inspired a mosaic from Chora Monastery depicting the scene of little Mary making her first steps and then going back into Anne's protecting arms (Fig. 6.3).

The image from Chora represents the child Mary dressed as an adult and advancing towards her mother, who is sitting on a bench with her arms outstretched to welcome her. Mary and Anne are haloed.

> And day by day the child waxed strong, and when she was six months old her mother stood her upon the ground to try if she would stand; and she walked seven steps and returned unto her bosom. And she caught her up, saying: As the Lord my God liveth, thou shalt walk no more upon this ground, until I bring thee into the temple of the Lord. And she made a sanctuary in her bed chamber and suffered nothing common or unclean to pass through it. And she called for the daughters of the Hebrews that were undefiled, and they carried her hither and thither.[126]

Both the *Protoevangelion* and the *Synaxarion*[127] underline Mary's precocity (her ability to walk early, at six months). But, contrary to the texts, iconographers sometimes place the scene of Mary's first steps after that of the blessing, which happen, as said, when the child was one year old. By

[125] Constantine Cavarnos (ed.), *Byzantine Sacred Art: Selected Writings of the Contemporary Greek Icon Painter Fotis Kontoglous on the Sacred Arts According to the Tradition of Eastern Orthodox*, Belmont, M.A.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1985, p. 97.

[126] James (ed. and trans.), *The Apocryphal New Testament: being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses, with other narratives and fragments*, p. 41.

[127] Alice-Mary Talbot (ed., trans.), *Synaxarion of Constantinople. Byzantine saints' lives in translation*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection 1998; St. Nicodemus the Hagiorite made also a translation in the late eighteenth century.



Fig. 6.3 The Virgin's first steps towards her mother, Chora Monastery/Kariye Djami, Istanbul, mosaic, c. 1320. (Personal photo, June 2015. The image is reproduced in P. A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami: the mosaics*, vol. 2, Pl. 88, p. 104 for the colour reproduction; p. 105 for the black and white version. This work contains also an illustration of *Anna Eleousa* from the same period, p. 314. For the first steps scene, see also D. R. Cartlidge and J. K. Elliott, *Art & Christian Apocrypha*, p. 28, fig. 2.6 (a black and white image). The colour photograph shows better that the scene is rendered in mosaic. (In addition to the reproductions of the mosaic depicting the Virgin's first steps in Kariye Djami shown here, there is also a fresco in Nerezi Church which represents St.-Panteleimon, the Nativity of the Virgin (but not the milk-nursing scene), and the Presentation to the Temple. Sašo Korunovski and Elizabeta Dimitrova, *Macédoine Byzantine. Histoire de l'art macédonien du lXe au XlVe siècle*, Thalia, Paris, 2006, trans. A. Cirier (the original Italian edition, Milan: Jaca Book Sp. A, 2006), pp. 67–69, caption p. 67, fig. 46.) The latter two authors state that this image is a fresco, but actually it is a mosaic; this is more noticeable in the colour photograph I have taken in June 2015)

doing so these renderers intend to emphasise the importance of the priests' act. This is the case at Humor, where, according to Adriana Balaban Bara,[128] the iconographers made this sequence in the cycle of Mary's life depicted as if the child were waiting for the priests' blessing in order to walk for the first time. The scholar elaborates on this (her statement applies equally to all visual representations of intimate episodes from the cycle "The Life of Mary"): "This sort of scene is rare. Researchers have tried to find the literary source of this depiction. Alfredo Tradigo considers the Homilies of St. John Damascene and the Homilies of St. Photius on the Birth of the Virgin as sources of inspiration for this iconic depiction."[129] We indicated in Chap. 2 what some of the sources for these depictions are, and indeed Damascene's "Oration on the Nativity of the Holy Theotokos Mary" was one of them. As John of Damascus was the strongest defender of icons, it was somehow natural for him to create also textual sources in which iconographers found inspiration.[130] Photius was also an active iconodoule in the period immediately following the iconoclastic disputes.[131]

St. Anne continually expressed her gratitude for the gift of motherhood she received in words and chants. As one could have anticipated and has been confirmed by the information in texts and the manifestation of iconographers' imagination, Anne, as any loving mother would, took good care of Mary, and so did Joachim. However, they kept the promise they made to God to dedicate their child to the Temple; they did this when the child was three years old. Literature does not tell us what Sts. Anne and Joachim did after that event.

Because patrons and iconographers felt justified by, among others, the texts we have examined to order and respectively depict breastfeeding scenes, it is logical that when necessity arose, those images were, in turn, employed to make a theological point. On this line of reasoning, our thesis is that Anna *Galaktotrophousa* entered iconography when docetist movements were at the peak of their development in Southern Europe and actions to combat their ideas were needed.

128 Balaban Bara, *The Political and Artistic Program of Prince Petru Rareș*, doctoral dissertation.

129 Balaban Bara, *The Political and Artistic Program of Prince Petru Rareș*, Annex 1, p. xxii. See also Alfredo Tradigo, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli, Mondadori Electa, Milan, 2004; J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2006.

130 Saint John of Damascus/Andrew Louth (ed.), *The Treatises against the Iconoclasts*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 2003.

131 Sugawara, "Anna *Eleous*a: Representation of Tenderness", p. 186.

CHAPTER 7

Anna Lactans/Galaktotrophousa Iconographic Motif Between the Twelfth and the Fourteenth Centuries

7.1 St. Anne Nursing in the Iconography Along the *Via Egnatia* Between the Twelfth and the Fourteenth Centuries

The visual representation of St. Anne breastfeeding her infant daughter in the churches located along the *Via Egnatia* and its vicinity has been dated to the period between the twelfth century and the end of the fourteenth.[1] As this iconographic motif is of relevance for a book on nourishment and on the anti-dualist stance that mainstream Christianity takes on breastfeeding and motherhood, in this chapter we shall study it in the geographical environs.

But before doing so, an earlier remark needs to be brought to mind: representations of Mary nursing the child Jesus have also been executed in time. They were variation of the *Eleusa* iconographical type; I have elaborated on this subject in another work.[2] According to Anthony Cutler, these images appeared in Byzantium from the beginning of its art. Certainly they were a visual subject in the ninth century (but also noted

[1] For a map of *Via Egnatia* with the ancient names of the locations, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Egnatia#/media/File:Via_Egnatia-en.jpg

[2] Ene D-Vasilescu, "A Case of Power and Subversion", pp. 241–242.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_7

in Latmos cave in the seventh),[3] a view not unanimously shared by scholars.[4] While agreeing with Ioli Kalavrezou[5] and Niki Tsironis[6] that the depictions of the Virgin with the child Jesus are reflections of the gradual entering of Mary's motherly qualities into literature and then iconography, I cannot see a direct parallelism between the visual rendering of St. Anne *Galaktotrophousa* and those of Virgin *lactans*, especially in the Late Middle Ages. Those depicting St. Anne breastfeeding are only known from the twelfth century onwards and their circulation has a specific trajectory (most of them exist in churches along the *Via Egnatia*), while those of Mary breastfeeding, as shown above, are almost concurrent with the beginning of iconography. Mary *Galaktotrophousa* depictions are found also in Egypt and other areas and were produced until the eighteenth century. The latest well-known icon of Mary feeding the child Jesus with maternal milk that I have both seen and am able to document was painted in 1784 by a monk Makarios, and today is in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki—BEI 542. By contrast, as far as my research has allowed ascertaining, St. Anne breastfeeding ceased to be depicted at the end of the fourteenth century (after commencing in the twelfth), and this temporal difference in the development of the two types of rendering (Mary and Anne respectively suckling their children) was for me an additional reason to connect the depictions of *Anna lactans* in Southern Europe with the existence of the Bogomils and make this idea the main thesis of the present book. Furthermore, the existence of the need for (mostly, but not exclusively) female Christian believers to appeal in prayer to St. Anne as an intermediary with regard to issues such

[3] Anthony Cutler, "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy", in *Byzantium, Italy and the North: Papers on Cultural Relations*, London 2000, pp. 164–189. This is Chap. 8 in the book and appear earlier as in article in "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy", in *JOB* 37 (1987) 335–350.

[4] Viktor Nikitich Lazarev contests that the Virgin *lactans* could have been an iconographic motif in Byzantium on the basis that it would not have appealed to the puritan taste of its inhabitants; he considers that such representations could only appear early in Coptic environments. See his article "Studies in the iconography of the Virgin", *Art Bulletin* 20 (1938), pp. 25–65 and the evidence from Egypt in the present book.

[5] I. Kalavrezou, "Images of the Mother. When the Virgin Mary Became 'Meter Theou'", *DOP*, vol. 44, 1990.

[6] Niki Tsironis, "From poetry to liturgy: the cult of the Virgin in the Middle Byzantine period", 91–99; Tsironis believes that the Virgin's motherly qualities were introduced firstly in poetry, then in homiletics, iconography, and eventually liturgy.

as fertility and child-bearing cannot constitute an exclusive alternative interpretation to the thesis just expressed above (although there is partial truth in this of course). This is so because women formulated such entreaties both before and after the fourteenth century, the only period in which Anne breastfeeding was visually represented. Therefore, it is correct to assume that another supplementary reason prompted the emergence and dissemination of Anne nursing iconography for a specific 200-year period.

Now, in our attempt to understand why *Via Egnatia* was conducive to the spreading of a particular iconographic motif, we shall provide details about it. The ancient and medieval *Via Egnatia* was a highway not only for transportation but also for cultural communication. As shown, it dates to the second century BC and continued to be an important thoroughfare between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. This road divided the Balkans into two parts in the area where it runs. If we reproduce here the description given by Mark Whittow of these mountains and their geographical and geological milieu, it is because that will give us a better understanding of the places through which the Egnatian Way coursed in medieval times and still partially does today. Whittow indicates that the centre of the Balkan Peninsula "is filled by the mountains and high plateaux of central Macedonia".[7] And further, with reference to the European itineraries they permit, "This knot of mountains is cut by several major rivers. Since many of the Balkan range are only crossed by a very limited number of practicable passes, these rivers and the roads they allow constrain travellers, traders, and armies to a tight route system which has governed the peninsula throughout its history. Above all, four major roads stand out. The first is the *Via Egnatia*, which runs east-west across the peninsula from Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic shore via Thessalonica to Constantinople."[8] We shall focus here on this access route. One of its ends was the ancient city of Byzantium (founded in about 667 BC[9]), the other, as shown, was Dyrrhachium, now Durrës and also Avlona, today Vlorë, with Thessaloniki at the central point ("*medio loco*") between Thrace and

[7] Mark Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium; 600–1025* (New Studies in Medieval History), Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1996, p. 15.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Byzantium (Greek: Βυζάντιον, *Byzántion*) was an ancient Greek city, founded by Greek colonists from Megara in 667 BC and named after their king Byzas (Βύζας).

Illyricum.[10] It has been reconstructed and modernised and is nowadays intensely circulated, but the forms of relief one encounters in travelling along this road are the same as those of the Middle Ages, when the churches that contain renderings of St. Anne milk-nursing were built and decorated not far from it.

Venice, just across the Adriatic Sea from its Western end, was easily accessible from Dyrrhachium and Avlona, and as a consequence, participated to a great extent in the commercial, religious, and cultural activities that took place along the Egnatian Way, including the exchange of artistic motifs such as those of the Virgin nursing Jesus and St. Anne breastfeeding the infant Mary (*Galaktotrophousa/Mlekopitatelnitsa)*.[11] Even Mistra/ Mystras was within easy reach from all of them and was central to the exchanges in the area; indeed, it was considered so and that lead to it becoming the capital of a Byzantine despotate—that of Morea—in the fourteenth century.

With regard to the scene depicting Anne suckling, which as noticed is a variation on the type of icon known as *Maria lactans*,[12] there are no records to prove its existence in the chapels and churches dedicated to the saint in Jerusalem and later in Constantinople, where her cult came to prominence. A mosaic representing St. Anne nursing might have existed within the decorative programme of the *Apostoleion* Church in Constantinople[13]; I will explain later why this might have been the case.

[10] "Thessalonicam" was "*medio loca* [sic] inter cypsela [sic] Thraciae et Dyrrachium Illyrici posita" in G. L. F. Tafel, *Die* via *military Romanorum Egnatia, qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur, dissertation geographica* (Tubingen 1842), p. 57.

[11] In this text the Greek term, *Galaktotrophousa,* the Slavonic one, *Mlekopitatelnitsa*, and the Latin one, *lactans*, will be used interchangeably.

[12] I have discussed the connection between the two types of icons in "A Case of Power and Subversion?".

[13] *Apostoleion* (The Church of the Apostles) in Constantinople was built by Justinian in 550 as a replacement for the original church founded by Constantius II (337–361) in the form of a cross. Procopius describes its construction by Justinian thus: "as shewing very special honour to all the Apostles together, he did as follows. There was in Byzantium from ancient times a church dedicated to all the Apostles; but having by now being shaken by the passage of time. […] Emperor Justinian pulled it down entirely, and he was at pain not simply to restore it, but to make it more worthy both in size and beauty […]." And in detail: "[T] wo arms (*pleurai*), of this enclosure which lie along the traverse line are equal to each other, but the arm which extends toward the west, along the upright line, is enough longer than the other to make the form of the cross […] in the center at least [is] resembling the Church of Sophia. The arches, four in number, rise aloft and are bound together in the same manner

From there, the theme represented in that mosaic could have been taken to Venice by the mosaicists, perhaps as early as the end of the eleventh

and the circular drum (*kykloteres*) which stands upon them is pierced by the windows, and the dome (*spheiroeides*) which arches above this seems to float in the air." In Procopius of Caesarea, *De aed.* I, 4, 7–13, J. Houry, Teubner (ed.), Leipzig, 1913, and *Buildings*, I, 3, 5–11, ed. by H. B. Dewing and G. Downey, London: William Heinemann, and Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Edition, vol. 7, 1940, p. 49. There is another description in *Codex Vaticanus* 1162 believed to be of this church; it shows five domes—the central one larger than the others. This interpretation of that image is contested today. Nevertheless, Gregory Nazianzen (who was interred there), in "XVl. Somnium. Anastasiae", *Carminum Liber ll. Histori*ca. *Poemata de Seipso*, PG 37. 1258 refers to the building as "having been hewn into four parts". It is assumed that the second *Apostoleion* Church, built over the ruins of the first one, has the same cruciform shape. Michael Maas, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p. 63 says also that the Justinian Church was cruciform and had many domes; Demus, in *The mosaic decorations*, while affirming that "San Marco shared essential features with its sixth-century model", describes the church as having a "cruciform shape, five domes, barrel vaults, and four-legged piers", p. 5. According to Wolfgang Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls: Byzantion, Konstantinupolis, Istanbul bis zum Beginn d. 17 Jh.*, Wasmuth Tübingen, 1977, p. 406, when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453, the Holy Apostles briefly became the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. Three years later the edifice, which was in a dilapidated state, was abandoned by the Patriarch, and in 1461 it was demolished by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror) to make way for the Fatih Mosque, which is still on the site today, even though in a reduced size and in an eighteenth century form. Mehmed II ruled from August 1444 to September 1446 and from February 1451 to May 1481. See also, Constantine of Rhodes, "Poème en vers iambiques", published in Émile Legrand, "Apostoleion. Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apotres de Constantinople", in *Revue des Études Grecques*, vol. 9, 1896, pp. 32–65—this is based on Cod. A 170, fol. 143v, Lavra [Monastery] of St. Athanasius, Mount Athos; Nicholas Mesarites (b. 1163), who visited the church, wrote an *ekphrasis* dedicated to it; the text has survived on fols. 93 sup.–96 sup. in Cod. Gr. 350, called by August Heisenberg Codex Ambrosianus; see A. Heisenberg, "Nikolaos Mesarites. Die Palastrerevolution des Johannes Komnenos", Prog., Wűrzburg, Stűrtz, 1907; introduction to *Grabeskirche u. Apostelkirche 2*, Leipzig, 1908; Glanville Downey (ed. and trans.), "Description of the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople", The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1957; see also his article "The Builder of the Original Church of the Apostles at Constantinople. A contribution to the criticism of the *Vita Constantini* attributed to Eusebius", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Washington, DC, 1951, vol. 6, pp. 51–80; K. Wulzinger, "Die Apostelkirche und ihre die Mehmedije zu Konstantinopel", *Byzantion* 7, 1932, pp. 7–10; Marc D. Lauxtermann, "Constantine's City: Constantine the Rhodian and the Beauty of Constantinople", Liz James and Antony Eastmond (eds.), *Wonderful Thing*s. *Byzantium through its Art*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2013, pp. 303–304, and J. Lansdowne, "Echoes of the Fourth-century *Apostoleion* in Late Antique *Italia Annoraria*", in *The Byzantinist*, the Newsletter of the Oxford Byzantine Society, Issue 1 (Spring) 2011, 4–5, 15.

century, when the main dedication of the basilica took place (1084).[14] Due to scarcity of information this cannot be sustained with certitude. But, as we have said and shall further be discussed, some churches along the Egnatian Way, where *Anna Galaktotrophousa* iconographic motif was depicted in medieval times, have survived. One such representation exists within the church of the Annunciation of the Theotokos in Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos (until 1998 it was considered the first surviving visual representation of St. Anne nursing),[15] a fresco in the Church of St. George, Kurbinovo, 1191 (Fig. 7.1),[16] and one in the Church of the Forty Martyrs, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, 1230[17] (because of its poor state of preservation, it was impossible to take a photo of this work). Other similar images are painted on the walls of the churches of the Apostles, Thessaloniki, 1310–1314 (Fig. 7.2)[18]; Peribleptos, Mistra (Mystras),

[14] Demus, Preface, in Demus (with a contribution by Rudolf M. Kloos), *The mosaic of San Marco in Venice*: *The eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Chicago and London, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984, vol. 1, ix; Demus and H. L. Kessler (eds.), *The mosaic decorations of San Marco, Venice*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 5.

[15] *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Tradition, History, Art*, edited by the community of Vatopaidi Monastery, Mount Athos, 1998, vol. 2, p. 368, colour image; Otto Wulf and Mikhail Alpatoff, *Denkmäler der Ikonenmalerei in kunstgeschichtlicher Folge*, Dresden, 1925. They reproduce (in black and white) the mosaic icon of St. Anne suckling the child Mary from Vatopedi Monastery in fig. 18 on 57, where they also mention its date. The piece was copied (with the acknowledgement of the source as being Wulf and Alpatoff's work) in Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, vol. 1, fig. Xll, p. 43, where the twelfth-century date is reaffirmed. Nikodim Pavlovich Kondakov has a black and white copy in *Pamiatniki khristianskago iskusstva na Athone* (St. Petersburg, 1902), pl. Xll. George Millet was also concerned with this icon; see G. Millet, J. Pargoire, and L. Petit, *Raquel des inscriptions chrétiennes de l'Athos*, Paris, 1904, p. 27.

[16] Cvetan Grozdanov and Lydie Hadermann Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, Skopjie: Makedonska kniga, 1991, fig. 26, comments pp. 15, 61. See also J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'Empire byzantin et en Occident* (Brussels, 1964), vol. 1, fig. 78 for a detail of this image. The dating of it is on 42 and 135; the later page contains also a description of the scene.

[17] André Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris: Paul Geuthnier, 1928, pp. 104–106 and В. Димова/Dimova, *Църковите в България преэ XIII-XIV век* [Churches in Bulgaria between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries], София/Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 2008, pp. 193–200.

[18] C. Stephan-Kaissis, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble: die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche*, Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1986 (digitalised in 2009) p. 3. The drawing which makes the scene of Anne nursing the child Mary is clear by the researcher; it is fig. 40 in the respective book; see also p. 202 in that publication. I went to the Church of the Twelve Apostles, Thessaloniki in 2011, and took photos there; see fig. 7.



Fig. 7.1 Saints Joachim and Anna (nursing). St. George Church, Kurbinovo, 1191 (Personal photo taken in August 2011. The image exists in Cvetan Grozdanov, *Kurbinovo and Other Studies on Prespa Frescoes*, Skopje 2006, p. [172]; it is also reproduced (poorer quality) in Cvetan Grozdanov and Lydie Hadermann Misguich, *Kurbinovo*, Skopjie 1991, fig. 26 in the respective book. (In Lydie Hadermann-Misguisch's book *Kurbinovo. Les fresques de Saint-Georges et la peinture byzantine du XII siècle,* Brussels, 1975, there is no mention of an image of Anna nursing (or any of Joachim). Looking at the photographs reproduced in the second volume of this book (especially fig. 6 'Interior view of the east part of the church'; black and white) I noticed that this particular fresco is missing from the wall. The only possible explanation for its absence is that when Hadermann-Misguisch did her research in Kurbinovo the wall on which Joachim and Anne are depicted was undergoing restoration; today the respective wall is almost half white and I assume that the loss is a consequence of that work.))



Fig. 7.2 St. Anne, little Mary, and Joachim. The Church of the Twelve Apostles, Thessaloniki. (Personal photos 2011)

1348[19] (Fig. 7.3); St. Stephen, Kastoria (Fig. 7.4), 1360s[20]; and in St. Mary Za(h)umska (Zaum), Trpejca/Peštani, on the Ohrid Lake in contemporary Macedonia, 1361 (Fig. 7.5).[21] A sculpture on one of the wooden pillars of the ciborium in the Church of San Marco/St. Mark, Venice, also represent Anne breastfeeding the infant Mary (Fig. 7.6).

A mosaic icon that depicts St. Anne breastfeeding Mary exists in Vatopedi Monastery. This is reproduced in various books[22] and represents

[19] Cutler is the only author who mentions and reproduces Anne nursing from Mistra in "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy" (in black and white). The other authors writing about Mistra, specifically about Peribleptos Church, offer general information about its iconographical programme. For instance, Suzy Dufrenne, in *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra*, Éditions Klincksieck, Paris, 1970, mentions it on pp. 13–19, 22–23, 26; on p. 15 she describes particularly the cycle containing the birth of the Virgin, with the scene of Anne milk-feeding the infant Mary included; Fig. 59, scheme XVIII a, b (Planches 29–30 together represents a drawing showing where each scene in Peribleptos is situated on the walls). On p. 2 she presents the situation of Mistra's monuments in literature at the time she wrote the book; in this context Millet's works are listed in footnotes: *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux XVe et XVIe siècles d'après les monuments de Macédoine, Mistra et Mont-Athos*, Paris, 1916, pp. VI–VII, XX, and 629; *Monuments byzantins de Mistra. Matériaux pour l'etude de l'architecture et de la peinture en Grèce aux XIVe et XVe siècles.* Album, Paris, 1910 (Monuments de l'art byzantin II), and "Rapport sur une mission á Mistra", in *B. C. H.*, XIX, 1895, pp. 268–272. Millet speaks about Mistra also in *L'École grecque dans l'architecture byzantine*, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'enseignement des Beaux-Arts, 1916. Manolis Chatzidakis's guide, edited with E. Karpodini-Dimitriadi, "Mystras. The medieval city and the castle", Athens: Ekdotike Athenon, 2005, has very good colour reproduction of the frescoes in the Byzantine town.

[20] Stylianos M. Pelekanides and Manolis Chatzidakis, *Καστορία*, Athens, 1985, p. 11; S. Gerstel, "Painted sources for female piety", fig. 12 (black and white), page [89] (unnumbered), and Ioannes Sisiou, "Η μερική ανανέωση της ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Στεφάνου στην Καστοριά κατά τον 13ο και 14ο αιώνα" (273–291), in *Niш i Vizantija* [Niš and Byzantium] vol. 7, 290, fig. 8; See also N. Siomkos, *L'eglise Saint Etienne à Kastoria*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2006, pp. 212–265 and Eirini Panou, *Aspects of St. Anna's Cult*, doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2011.

[21] Grozdanov, *La peinture murale d'Ohrid au XlVe siècle* (Ohrid, 1980). A black and white reproduction of the fresco with Anne nursing exists in this book, fig. 75, comments on 111. Saso Korunovski and Elizabeta Dimitrova, *Macédoine byzantine. Histoire de l'art macédonien du lXe au XlVe siècle*, Paris, 2006, trans. A. Cirier (Italian edition, Milan 2006), pp. 197–198.

[22] The mosaic icon of St. Anne breastfeeding the child Mary; twelfth century; 25 × 20 cm; the Church of the Annunciation of the *Theotokos*, Vatopedi, Mount Athos. The source for the colour image is E. N. Tsigaridas, "Portable icons", *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi*, 1998, vol. 2, p. 370, fig. 313 in that book; detail on the right, caption p. 369, description on pp. 368–369. A black and white copy exists in Wulf and Alpatoff as well as in N. P. Kondakov and J. Lafontaine-Dosogne's work.



Fig. 7.3 St. Anne nursing the child Mary in the Church of the Peribleptos, Mistra, 1348. (The image is presented as a part of the iconographic cycle of Mary's infancy; personal photo, August 2013. (There is a black and white reproduction of this fragment of fresco in Cutler, "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy", fig. 6, p. 181; discussion about St. Anne on p 175))

the saint in full length, on a footstool, with a slight turn of the body to the left, as she holds the child Mary with her left hand. Both St. Anne and her daughter wear dark blue cloaks and tunics which are red and light brown, respectively. Their haloes, like the background of the lower part of the icon, are made of multicoloured *tesserae* (green, silver, and red), while "the upper part of the background of the icon consists of silver tesserae only".[23] Some of the *tesserae*, especially on the upper left, have been replaced by wax pieces. The icon has a multicoloured zigzag framing. Two

[23] Euthymios N. Tsigaridas, "Portable icons", in *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi. Tradition, History, Art*, Mount Athos: Great and Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi, 1998, vol. 2 [pp. 349–417], p. 368.



Fig. 7.4 St. Anne nursing the child Mary in St. Stephen Church, Kastoria/ Castoria, 1360s. (Personal photo; August 2013. (There is reproduction of this image in Ιωάννης Σίσιου—Ioannes Sisiou, "Η μερική ανανέωση της ζωγραφικής του Αγίου Στεφάνου στην Καστοριά κατά τον 13ο και 14ο αιώνα" (pp. 273–291), in *Niш i Vizantija* [Niš and Byzantium] VII; in the publication the image of St. Anne is on p. 290, fig. 8. See also S. Gerstel "Painted Sources for Female Piety in Medieval Byzantium", Dumbarton Oaks Papers 52 (1998), pp. 89–111; Pelekanides and Chatzidakis, *Καστορία*, pp. 6–21 and S. M. Pelekanides, *Καστορία*, Makedonike Bibliotheke 17, Hetaireia Byzantinon Spoudon, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1953, pl. 101b. I have published my photo also in Ene D-Vasilescu "A Case of Power and Subversion?", fig. 20 on p. 270; the editors of the journal gave me permission to include it here))



Fig. 7.5 (**a**, **b**) St Anne nursing the child Mary in the Church of Virgin Mary [Bogorodica] Zahumska, Trpejca village, Peštani, Macedonia, 1361. (Personal photos, August 2011)



Fig. 7.6. (**a**, **b**) Sculpture (bas-relief) of St. Anne nursing Mary. Column A supporting the ciborium above the high altar in St. Mark, Venice; 1105 (?). (Photos taken in August 2011)

inscriptions on its background identify the holy people within it: the one on the left side reads "Η ΑΓΗΑ ΑΗΑ" and the second, on the right of the child, "ΜΡ ΘΥ" (for Μήτηρ Θεού—Mother of God). The writing is made from *tesserae* which are darker and contrast with the lighter background. The literature consulted, except for the book *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi* (in which the hypothesis of the thirteenth or fourteenth century is vaguely advanced[24]), assigns the creation of the piece to the twelfth century.[25] This unusual iconographic work renders both Anne and Mary haloed and wearing reddish *maphorions* (that of the child has also white stripes); they have their heads covered by veils. Mosaic is not a typical medium for a portable icon, as wood is. In any case, the production of the icon in this manner was fortunate because *tesserae* (made from varieties of stone, sand-based materials, silver, or gold—in this case, silver) are much more resistant over time than wood, and this is why one can still see this piece today (actually, it was impossible for me to look at it in person because, as a woman, I am not allowed to visit Mount Athos). The raised, solid wood frame, which has been dated to the early fourteenth century, is covered by a silver revetment having panels in which figurative and geometrical decorative elements alternate. The reverse of the icon is covered with textile material, on which a Russian inscription in cinnabar reads: "[from] the tsarina and grand duchess Anastasia".[26] (She was the first wife of Ivan the Terrible, b. 1530; reigned 1533–1584[27]). Above the inscription the name of the monastery—"V[a]t[o]p[e]d[iou]"—is given in the form of a cross-shaped monogram. The bordering of *Anna Galaktotrophousa* icon in Vatopedi that represents holy figures consists in the busts of two angels preparing the celestial throne (top of the frame), of the Apostles Thomas, James, and Philip (bottom of frame), and of the full-length, full-face figures of St. Joachim, the grandfather of Christ, and St. Joseph the

[24] E. N. Tsigaridas, "Portable icons", and Katia Loverdou-Tsigarida, "Byzantine small artworks", *The Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopaidi*, vol. 2, pp. 368, respectively 489.

[25] O. Wulf and M. Alpatoff, *Denkmåler der Ikonenmalerei*, p. 57; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge*, vol. 1, fig. Xll, p. 43.

[26] Tsigaridas, "Portable icons", pp. 368–369.

[27] Among the multitude of books about the Ivan IV the Terrible, we mention some of the newest: Sergei Bogatyrev, "Ivan IV (1533–1584)", in Maureen Perrie (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia, vol. 1: From Early Rus' to 1689*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, chapter 10; Isabel De Madariaga, *Ivan the Terrible: First Tsar of Russia*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2005.

Betrothed. Katia Loverdou-Tsigarida affirms that "The subjects, which are rendered in high relief, are marked stylistically by a combination of features of the Paleologue renaissance, somewhat clumsily rendered".[28] She considered that in terms of subject matter the offering of this icon was a form of supplication on the part of the donor.[29] This is usually the purpose of any donation, at least in a religious context, but when there is a possibility that the donor was Ivan the Terrible, perhaps it is appropriate to provide more information. The Romanov family, from which his first consort originates, supposedly received the icon as a gift from the wife of the Byzantine Emperor, John the VI Cantacuzene (1347–1356).[30] Alternatively, according to Yuri Piatnitski—and this is rather plausible if we connect his statement with the rest of the information in our book—the piece comes from the Serbian krals.[31] Ivan IV's grandmother, Anna Glinskaya, was a Serbian princess and she gave the icon to the wife of her grandson on the occasion of their wedding, according to the custom of the time [Ivan's mother was indeed an Elena Glinskaya of Serbian origin]. Both sources seem to agree that after the tsarina's death, the icon was sent to Vatopedi, but Loverdou-Tsigarida considers that the issue concerning the provenance of this icon has not been solved yet.

The atypical fresco of Anne (the saint is breastfeeding in a standing position) on the southern wall in St. George Chapel, Kurbinovo (not far from Prespa Lake in Macedonia) represents her in a three-quarter view holding the child, whose head is covered, with her left arm. Mary, painted almost in profile, clutches Anne's right hand with her left and suckles.

Although the saint's gaze is directed towards the observer, the paint on a part of her face has been degraded over time leaving her expression unclear. In general, the fresco has been reasonably preserved, even

[28] Loverdou-Tsigarida, "Byzantine small art-works", p. 489.

[29] Idem, pp. 458–500

[30] N. P. Kondakov, in "Pamiatniki hristianskogo iskusstiva na Afone" [Christian art monuments on Mount Athos], 1892, reprinted 1902, p. 114, said that the wife of Emperor John VI gave the icon to Anastasia, but obviously the chronology would not match; John reigned in 1347–1356 and Anastasia Romanova died in 1560 (her wedding took place in 1547). Kondakov regards the icon of St. Anne breastfeeding as a part of a triptych of which the central piece is an eikonidion representing Christ the Saviour in Esphigmenou Monastery, Mount Athos, Greece, p. 113. (An eikonidion is a small icon).

[31] Yuri Piatnitski, "O vizantijskoj portativnoj mozaiki v. Rosii" [Concerning the fate of Byzantine portable mosaics in Russia], *Vizantija i Bliznij Voskov*, St. Petersburg, 1994, pp. 108–116.

though its lower area is partially discoloured; also the shade of the holy women's attire is indeterminate. The Kurbinovo artist is known to have had "the most eccentric brush strokes in the history of Byzantine art"[32]; he streaked deep creases on Anne's cheeks and between her brows in order to emphasise her old age. (In the Palaeologan epoch such a liberty was possible because liturgical art was freer than previously in its relation to the canon and thus the painters were allowed to display "human" features, including the passing of time, in their work. In the previous era, Byzantine art was more "stylised" and abstract and did not allow for temporal or spatial indications in icons and frescoes.) As mentioned before, St. George Chapel was built in 1191; the Byzantine influence in this area became more evident after the end of the reign of Tzar Samuil, the founder of the first medieval Slavo-Macedonian state, who ruled a kingdom centred in Prespa and Ohrid from 976 to 1014.[33] The church in Kurbinovo is not very large; it is also simple in its shape. Yet from the cultural and spiritual point of view, it is very important for scholars and clearly for the local people.

An *Anna* (and also Elizabeth) *Mlekopitatelnitsa* was painted in the lunette over the doorway of the exonarthex in the Church of *Sveti Chetirideset Machenitsi/*the Holy Forty Martyrs, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, 1230. Tarnovo was the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire between 1185 and 1396; it was the dominant power in the Balkans until 1256.[34]

[32] Sugawara, "Anna Eleousa", p. 182.

[33] Bernard Comrie and Greville G. Corbett, *The Slavonic Languages*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993; Alexander M. Schenker, *The Dawn of Slavic: An Introduction to Slavic Philology*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995, and Aleksandar Panev, "Macedonia", in Richard C. Frucht, *Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture*, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005, vol. 3.

[34] André Grabar, *La peinture religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris: Paul Geuthnier, 1928, pp. 104–106; В. Димова/Dimova, *Църковите в България през XIII-XIV век* [Churches in Bulgaria between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries], София/Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 2008, pp. 193–200. The second Bulgarian Empire reached the peak of its power under Kaloyan and Ivan Asen II. The Byzantines were defeated in several major battles, and in 1205 the newly established Latin Empire was crushed in the battle of Adrianople by Emperor Kaloyan. His nephew, Ivan Asen II (1218–1241), defeated the Despotate of Epirus and made Bulgaria a regional power once again. However, in the late thirteenth century the Empire declined under the constant invasions of Tatars, Byzantines, Hungarians, Serbs, and internal instability and revolts. After the Empire was divided into several independent small states in the late fourteenth century, they were conquered by the Ottoman Empire.

Concerning the painting, as the damage to its tops and edges is severe, probably as a result of humidity (the church is very close to the Yantra River), the figures of the mother and daughter are hardly visible, and their expressions have become obscured. What can be more guessed than seen is Anne with her head turned a little from the viewer while she supports the child Mary on her left arm and tucks up the *maphorion* with the right hand. The daughter is painted almost in a side view clinging to her mother's right hand with her left and suckling. When I visited the church in 2011 with Prof. Magdalino and a group of scholars from the International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sophia, the fresco was not on the wall but removed to be transported to the city's museum for restoration; in its stead a reproduction on paper was stuck on the wall.

With regard to the image in the Holy Apostles Church, Thessaloniki, Stephan-Kaissis states, "Today, you can still recognise the figures of Anna, who is holding Mary on her knees and breast-feeds her".[35] What I was able to recognise with certainty in the fresco was a building; I have confidence that I was able to identify the sitting figure of Anne with Mary on her lap and a standing person who I think is Joachim. The church has had a very troubled history and many colours have faded, particularly in the south-west corner, very high up, close to the ceiling where most of the scenes of "Mary's Nativity" cycle are represented; today that is a very dark spot in the church. The frescoes were completed between 1310 and 1314, but in 1520–1530 they were whitewashed and many of the golden *tesserae* of the mosaics were hammered down. After the liberation of the city in 1912 the church was restored (principally in 1940–1941), and again after the earthquake of 1978; now Christian services take place there once again.

Concerning Anne nursing Mary in the paintings from the Church of Mary Peribleptos in Mistra (Fig. 7.3), the saint cradles the daughter on her right arm and slightly inclines her head towards the child while directing her gaze almost directly towards the viewer. Mary, entirely enveloped in a dark cloth, is turned towards her mother's breast. It is difficult to read the expressions on the faces of the two holy figures at the present (generally

[35] "Zu erkennen sind heute noch die Figuren von Anna, die Maria auf den Knien hält und ihr die Brust", Christine Stephan-Kaissis, *Ein byzantinisches Bildensemble: die Mosaiken und Fresken der Apostelkirche*, Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1986, p. 3 (39), Fig. 40 in the respective book; description on p. 202; the book was digitalised in 2009.

speaking, the frescoes have been affected by the passing of time; cleaning and restoration are planned).

At Mistra, the image of nursing is presented in the context of the iconographic cycle of Mary's childhood; the logical order of the episodes and the similarity with the relevant sequence of painting from other churches reassures us that the fresco shows St. Anne and her daughter (otherwise, there are no inscriptions there, and an uninitiated viewer could believe that Mary and the Child Jesus are depicted in that fresco). Additional evidence that the scene represents Anne breastfeeding consists in the fact that the child has her head covered; that shows that it is a girl (the infant Christ is always depicted with his head uncovered). I can add to the argument that the architectural structure depicted behind Anne and Mary within the fresco is similar to that in the corresponding scene from the Holy Apostles Church in Thessaloniki (insofar as the latter can be worked out from the poorly preserved mural). Mary Peribleptos Church was constructed and decorated between 1348 and 1380, mostly during the despotate of Manuel Kantakouzenos in Morea (c. 1326–1380; reigned in 1349–1380[36]); he was the son of the Byzantine Emperor John VI. The painting of Peribleptos Church, including the Mary's infancy cycle, was accomplished in 1348 according to the explanatory note at the museum in Mistra; it seems that there is agreement that the entire church was painted as one project.[37] Peribleptos was a new addition to other churches which the Byzantine and the local people erected there previously (a church and a bishop existed in the neighbouring city of Lacedaemon/Lacedemonia, today Sparti, since the fifth century, and the thirteenth century witnessed a flourishing of the churches in Mistra). The town remained the capital of the despotate ruled by relatives of the Byzantine Emperor until 1460 (when Demetrius Palaeologus, the last despot of Morea, de jure 1438–1451; de facto 1436–1438 and 1451–1460, surrendered the city to Sultan Mehmed II), although the Venetians controlled the coast and the islands during a part of that period.[38]

[36] Donald M. Nicol, *The Byzantine family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: a genealogical and prosopographical study*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1968, p. 122

[37] I visited the medieval city in the summer of 2013 with Yoanna Planchette from the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris.

[38] More general literature about Mistra and the Peloponnese: Steven Runciman, *Lost capital of Byzantium. The History of Mistra and Peloponnese*; foreword John Freely, Tauris Parke Press, London, New York, 2009 (reprint); Suzy Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques*

Did the ruler or members of his court in Mistra travelled to places where Anne nursing was depicted—perhaps to Thessaloniki, where this tableau was rendered earlier in the Church of the Apostles—and commission masters to decorate the churches in the capital of the despotate, while keeping that iconographic episode? That is a possibility; after all, Manuel and his wife, Isabelle-Zampea-Margaret (perhaps re-baptised into the Orthodox Church as Maria[39]) de Lusignan did not have children,[40] and perhaps they ordered the cycle of Mary's childhood to be represented and to include the breastfeeding scene, hoping for Anne's intercession to give them offspring of their own—just as the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI did earlier in Constantinople. But we do not know this with certainty.

In St. Stephen Church, Kastoria (Fig. 7.4), there is an image of *Anna Mlekopitatelnitsa* of *Dexiokratousa* type,[41] on the northern surface of the partition of the window looking into the nave/*naos* from the narthex. The saint, wearing a red *maphorion*, is depicted in a three-quarter view. She has her left arm round Mary's back, supports the child's thigh with the right hand, and leans her head slightly towards her daughter, who is painted in side view, looking to her mother's breast, which she holds with both hands while drinking milk. Her dark clothes almost entirely cover her body; her

des églises byzantines de Mistra, Éditions Klincksieck, Paris, 1970, p. 2; Despoina Evgenidou, Jenny Albani et alii (eds.), *The city of Mystra*, the catalogue of the exhibition *Byzantine Hours* Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens/Mistra 2001, August 2001–January 2002; Teresa C. Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea: Historiography in Crusader Greec*e, Oxford University Pres, Oxford, 2009; S. E. J. Gerstel, "Art and identity in the Medieval Morea", in Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 2001 [pp. 263–285]. Harold E. Lurier, *Crusaders as Conquerors: the Chronicle of Morea* translated from the Greek with notes and introduction by Columbia University Press, New York, 1964; John Smith, *The Chronicle of Morea: a history in political verse*, Groningen: Bouma's Boekhus, 1967; W. J. Aerts and Hero Hokwerda, *Lexicon on the Chronicle of Morea*, Forsten, Groningen, 2002; N. B. Drandakis and "The mural paintings in the northeast funerary chapel", in the *Parekklesion of Hagia Sophia*, Mistra: Mistra Museum, 1985, pp. 469–500; Luigi Ciotta, "Mistrà. La Chiese dei Santi Teodori e dell' Odighitria", *Bollettino del Centro di Studi per la storia dell' Architectura*, no. 30, 1983, pp. 23–33, and Iannis Voultos/Γιάννης Βούλτος, Μυστράς. *Η αρχιτεκτονική των σημαντικότερων υστεροβυζαντινών ναών του: Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος, οι Άγιοι Θεόδωροι, η Παναγία Οδηγήτρια, η Αγία Σοφία, η Περίβλεπτος, η Ευαγγελίστρια, η Παντάνασσα* [Mystras. The architecture of the major late Byzantine churches: Agios Dimitrios, the Sts. Theodore, the Dormition of the Virgin, St. Sophia, Perivleptos, Evangelistra, and Pantanassa], 2013.

[39] S. Runciman, *Lost capital of Byzantium*, p. 49.

[40] Nicol, *Byzantine Family*, p. 127.

[41] *Dexiokratousa* means literally "the one who holds with her right".

head is covered by a white veil. The usual inscriptions accompanying this iconographic scene are also present: one, which is divided and flanks either side of Anne, is "Η ΑΓΙΑ ΑΝΑ", and the other, "ΜΡ ΘΥ", is above Mary's head. In the Agioi Anargyroi Church close to Kastoria, built in 1180s, Anna Radini, the aristocratic patroness, and the wife of Theodoros Limniotis, is depicted next to Virgin Mary. I mention this because these founders had connections in Constantinople, the iconographers might have come from the Byzantine capital along the *Via Egnatia*; they might be the same who painted St. George Chapel in Kurbinovo (1191) where, as observed, Anne breastfeeding features.[42]

An *Anna Galaktotrophousa* is rendered on the northern wall of the naos in the Church of Mary, the Mother of God [Bogorodica] in Zaum Monastery on Ohrid Lake (Fig. 7.5), which according to the inscription inside, above the entrance door, was built and decorated in 1361.

The identity of the saint was established only after the cleaning of the walls and careful restoration. The works of Nikolovski, Stamatoski,[43] and Grozdanov[44] also contributed to the correct attribution. Subsequent to the construction of the church, a window was cut in the wall that excised the left half of Anna's lower body, and graffiti has been carved on the fresco and around it. An innovative approach is noticeable in the close-up fresco in which the newly born Mary is very clearly being breastfed; as mentioned above, not all renderings concerning the scene discussed are so direct. The holy woman, represented in a three-quarter view, has her left arm round the infant Virgin's back while her right hand holds the left breast. Anne tilts her head slightly towards Mary and looks at her. The child, painted almost in profile, lies on the mother's left arm and uses her left hand to hold the breast in order to suck. The direction of her gaze cannot be ascertained due to the deterioration of the painting. Grozdanov, mentioning the image of St. Anne among others on the wall of Mary Zahumska Church, says, "On the North wall, facing the pendant representing Jesus as the Supreme Judge, one can find: Anna nursing the infant Mary, John the Baptist, and the Virgin and the Child on a throne, all very close to the

[42] Gerstel, "*Painted sources for female piety*", fig. 14.

[43] A. Nikolovski and T. Stamatoski (eds.), *Kliment. Ohridski studii*, Odbor za Odbelezuvanje na 1100 godisninata od doaganjeto na Kliment vo Ohrid i formiranjeto na Ohridskata škola za slovenska kultura i pismenost, Skopje: Misla, 1986.

[44] Grozdanov, *La peinture murale d'Ohrid au XlVe siècle.*

dividing wall of the sanctuary".[45] In general, the frescoes in St. Mary Church are damaged and the fact that the building is surrounded by water has not helped their preservation. When I visited it in August 2011, the restoration of the fresco and of the church in general was underway. This and past restorations allow the viewer to recognise some of the figures on the walls. In the first register, depicted life-size, are Christ, Mary *Theotokos*, Sts. Clement, Naum, and others more problematic to identify. The second band on the wall illustrates episodes from the cycle "Life of the Virgin" which we focus on here. On the northern wall the *Deisis* is represented. The eastern side of the former parvis is covered with a scene showing Jesus Christ and His Mother in royal garments. There are also portraits of Sts. Peter and Paul, as well as of Sts. George and Demetrios wearing clothes specific to the local nobility. Despite the fact that the frescoes are now damaged, the skilfulness of the icon painter can still be appreciated. According to Nikolovski, Cornakov, Balabanov, in all these compositions the painter manifests a sense of spontaneity and a refined taste; he uses pure and warm tones and a vivid variety of colours. Sašo Korunovski and Elizabeta Dimitrova also mention a "warm chromatic harmony" as well as the presence of "lyric elements", "balanced compositions", and a "discreet modelling of images" in St. Mary Church.[46] Given these features, they distinguish the fresco master of Bogorodica Zahumska (sometimes called Zaumska) from his contemporaries who worked in Ohrid.[47] It is assumed that the artist gained his painting education in Thessaloniki. Grozdanov points out that some of the frescos from the *narthex* of this church were mentioned by Miljukov as early as 1899[48] and also later by Gabriel Millet,[49] but the

[45] "Faisant pendant à Jésus Juge Suprème se trouvent sur le mur nord: Anne allaitant l'Enfant Marie, Jean le Précurseur, et la Vierge? l' Enfant sur un trône, tout près de la cloison du sanctuaire." Grozdanov, *La peinture murale d'Ohrid au XlVe siècle*, p. 197; my translation.

[46] Korunovski and Dimitrova, *Macedoine Byzantine*, p. 196.

[47] Antonie Nikolovski, Dimitar Cornakov, and Kosta Balabanov (eds.), *Spomenici na kulturata na Makedonija*, [The cultural monuments of Macedonia], Skopje: Misla, 1961, pp. 246–247. There are two images of the church in this book: on p. 246 (black and white; a bird-eye view) and on p. 247 a coloured image.

[48] Pavel N. Miljukov, "Hristianskie drevnosti zapadnoy Makedonii", in *Trudah/Izvestija arheologicheskogo instituta v Konstantinopole*, Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, iv, 1899.

[49] Gabriel Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'évangile aux XIV, XV, et XVI siècles: d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos*, (drawings S. Millet), Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1960.

entire composition has never been thoroughly analysed before. Zahumska, which does not hold religious services today, is located on the south-eastern side of the Ohrid Lake, approximately 20 km from the town of Ohrid, near Trpejca village; it can only be reached by boat.[50] The plan of the church is cruciform with a dome surmounting the central part. The blind arches divide its three-sided apse. The original plan behind this ensemble has not been completely understood. Since the forecourt and some parts of the building have disappeared over time, this will probably never happen.[51] Details about the founders are, at least partially, provided in the inscription above the entrance door:

> This divine and all-holy church was erected from the foundation in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos of Zahumska [to commemorate] the death of the most pious *kaisaros* Grgur. This was written by his holiness the Lord Bishop of Devol, Gregory, the *protothronos*, during the reign of Stephen Uroš, in the month of August of year 6869, in the year 1361 of our Lord. Indiction 14.[52]

The hermitage (it seems that this is what it was when it had inhabitants, even though some literature names it a "monastery"[53]) is considered to be a *metochion* (a dependency) of the Monastery of St. Naum by the local people because of its reduced proportions (the two sites are not far from one another; only a short trip by water separates them). In the Ohrid area St. Anne is especially revered. When I visited the Monastery of St. Naum in 2008, on the occasion of the International Congress of Slavists, I was able to notice this myself. Icons of the saint holding the infant Mary on her lap in the same way in which the Mother holds the Child Jesus were sold in the shops around this monastery, a few kilometres from the place where Zahum is located. Since the cult of St. Anne has developed to such an extent in this geographical area, one can see why Prof. Grozdanov and other researchers did not have any doubt that the holy figures painted on the walls in the Za(h)umska Church are St. Anne and Mary.

[50] I undertook the trip this way in August 2013 with Jasna Trengoska, who was a student at Ohrid University at that time.

[51] Grozdanov, *La peinture murale d'Ohrid au XlVe siècle*, p. 196.

[52] Jordan Ivanov transcribed this inscription in *B'lgarski i starini iz Makedonija*, Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1970, p. 55.

[53] Korunovski and Dimitrova, *Macedoine Byzantine*, p. 196.



Fig. 7.7 (**a**) The birth of the Virgin (*La nascita Della Vergine*)—and her first feeding with milk. Mosaic in the Western Bay of the south transept. The caption referring to Anne giving birth is above: "HECIAPITHECNVTPIT HIC SVSCIPIT HECBENDICIT"/"This [woman] feeds, she nourishes, here [she] sustains and blesses." Both images, (**a**) and (**b**) could be re-workings by Dominicus Gigola/Cicola (1690) of the original tableaux from 1084. (My photo; conditions for taking photographs are difficult as the mosaic is on the high ceiling). (**b**) "Rejection of Joachim and Anne's offering" with the misplaced inscription describing the previous scene

Beyond the Western end of the Egnatian Way, St. Anne nursing is represented in two scenes in the "high-profile" Church of San Marco, Venice: one is sculpted on column A of the ciborium (Fig. 7.6a), and one is in mosaic (on the ceiling in the southern transept), Fig. 7.6b.[54] (Although the scene in mosaic does not show clearly the nursing in process, the writer of the inscription nearby intimates that it is such; in any case, it is highly probable that the artist's intention was to suggest this act).

If the ciborium was made at the same time as the altarpiece (Pala d'Oro) it protects, it might date either from 976 or from 1105. Weigel opines that the motifs on its pillars are the result of local imitation of Constantinopolitan

[54] Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, p. 33.

sculpture exported there.[55] In 976 the doge Pietro Orselo ordered from Jerusalem a set of plaques made in gold and enamel nailed on wood for the altar of the second church of St. Mark in Venice (the first was consecrated in 1084[56]). In 1105, under the doge Ordelaffo Falier (who ordered them three years earlier), the plaques were refashioned into a *pala* (altarpiece or panel placed behind and over the altar) which was enriched further in 1209 with booty from the Crusaders' sack of Constantinople.[57]

With respect to the mosaic, Anne's nursing position (Fig. 7.7a) is explained in an inscription, thus: "HECIAPITHECNVTPIT HIC SVSCIPIT HECBENDICIT", that is, "Haec parit, haec nutrit, hic suscipit haec benedicit"/"This [woman] feeds, she nourishes, here [she] sustains and blesses" (The caption refers to the saint and the episode corresponds to the typical scene in the Byzantine cycle "the Infancy of the Virgin"). In the mosaic we see today, this text has been wrongly placed above the episode of the rejection of Joachim and Anne's sacrifice, Fig. 7.7b. As further explained, that happened during a restoration which took place in the seventeenth century, when another illustrated scene (that of Mary's parents leaving the temple) was lost. The caption that was supposed to explain the action in the image from Fig. 7.7b has fortunately been preserved in earlier descriptions of San Marco. It reads "HIC SPERNIT DANTES STERILES REDEUNT LACRYMANTES" ("Here [are those] barren people who bring gifts; they were spurned and went back crying"). Both images, and the other following them in sequence, are typical for any Palaeologan painting programme that includes the cycle of Mary's infancy. The major restoration of the mosaics in San Marco in the seventeenth century (completed in 1690) took place under the direction of Dominico/Dominicus Gigola (Cicola).[58] Otto Demus comments

[55] Thomas Weigel, *Die Reliefsäulen des Hauptaltarciboriums von San Marco in Venedig: Studien zu einer spätantiken Werkgruppe*, Rhema-Verlag, Munster, 1997, p. 20. See also his *Le colonne del ciborio dell'altare maggiore di San Marco a Venezia: nuovi argomenti a favore di una datazione in epoca protobizantina*, Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig, Venice: Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani, 2000.

[56] Otto Demus (Herbert L. Kessler ed.), *The mosaic decorations of San Marco*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 3.

[57] Fred S. Kleiner and Christin J. Mamiya, *Gardner's art through the ages: the western perspective*, Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006, p. 267.

[58] Dominico Cicola (Gigola) made the mosaic of the "Life of the Virgin" cycle after cartoons by Giannantonio Fumiani; Pietro Saccardo, *Les mosaïques de Saint Marc à Venise,* Venice: Ferd Ongania, 1896, p. 279. See also Otto Demus and Maria Andaloro, *Basilica*

on the result of this work, and in his report on changes to the "Infancy cycle", he states, "The mosaic of 1690 does not quite correspond to this inscription since it represents only the Rejection of Joachim's offering and not the Return of the Virgin's parents".[59]

J. Lafontaine-Dosogne points out that, typically, the depicted story of Mary's early years includes the following episodes: Joachim's offerings rejected; Joachim and Anne returning home (sometimes the artists conflate these two); St. Joachim in the wilderness; St. Anne in the garden (the last two sometimes rendered within the same painting); Nativity of the Virgin; The Virgin Blessed by the Priests; and The Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple [sometimes a scene representing Anna pregnant is also depicted, as in *Kızıl Çukur*, Cappadocia].[60] Judging by the representations of this cycle in various churches, for instance that of Anne and Joachim in *Kızıl Çukur* (sixth–seventh century according to N. Thierry;[61] tenth–eleventh centuries in the view of André Grabar and other researchers[62]), the Church of the Saviour in Chora (or *The Kariye Djami*, decorated in the fourteenth century),[63] both in today's Turkey; *Timios Stavros* Church at Pelendri, Cyprus (Palaeologan; mid-fourteenth

Patriarchale in Venezia. San Marco. I Mosaici. Le Iscrizioni. La Pala D'Oro, Milano: Fabbri Editori, 1991, 68 (colour illustration after the mosaic *La nascita della Vergine*, p. 98).

[59] Demus and Kloos, *The mosaic of San Marco in Venice*, vol. 1, p. 127.

[60] J. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en Occident,* Brussels 1964, vol. 1, pp. 62–65 (Joachim's Offerings Rejected); 65–67 (Joachim and Anne Returning Home); 77–81 (St. Joachim in the Wilderness); 91–121 (Nativity of the Virgin); 120 (The breastfeeding of Mary);128–133 (The Virgin Blessed by the Priests), and 136–167 (The Presentation of the Virgin to the Temple).

[61] Nicole Thierry, *La Cappadoce de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2002, pp. 122–123.

[62] André N. Grabar, *Christian iconography: a study of its origins*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 129; Ann Wharton-Epstein, "Rock-cut chapels in Göreme Valley, Cappadocia: the Yilanli group and the column churches", *Cahiers archéologiques. Fin de l'antiquité et moyen-âge*, vol. 24 (1975) [pp. 115–135], p. 118. The Mariological cycle is found in the Northern chapel dedicated to Anne and Joachim. Twelve scenes survive, ten of which include Mary's parents.

[63] Paul A. Underwood, *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 1 "Historical Introduction and Description of the Mosaics and Frescoes"; description, pp. 60–72; vol. 2, "Plates 1–334. The mosaics"; illustrations, pp. 86–124, Bollingen Series LXX, New York: Pantheon Books; both published in 1966.

century)[64]; later *Humor*, Romania (1535) mentioned above[65]; and some of the churches to which Lafontaine-Dosogne points out in her book,[66] it could be securely assumed that the two scenes from the Venetian basilica are the remains of a similar ensemble of images. Therefore they give an indication as to how the first mosaicists in the eleventh century arranged this part of the church decoration. It seems that, in addition to the painterly "narration" still visible today, there used to be (to the left) an image of Mary's parents before her birth and (to the right) the Nativity of Mary, her blessing by the priests, and her dedication to the temple.

We shall perhaps note that Nicole and Michel Thierry and also Lafontaine-Dosogne have observed that the iconography of column A in San Marco's ciborium has similarities with that in *Kızıl Çukur*[67]—however, in the Cappadocian Church there is no nursing scene. If the building was erected and decorated in the sixth–seventh century as N. Thierry believed, it means that the cycle of Mary's childhood dates from the pre-Iconoclastic era.[68] However, it seems that the nursing scene is a latter addition to the ensemble; the churches containing it, as shown, were decorated with certainty between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. N. Thierry believes that this type of illustration (the Nativity cycle) was discontinued

[64] Bacci, "Syrian, Palaiologan, and Gothic Murals in the Nestorian Church of Famagusta", p. 213.

[65] Balaban Bara, *The Political and Artistic Program of Prince Petru Rareș of Moldavia*; in this case the name of the painter is known; he was Toma of Suceava.

[66] Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance de la Vierge dans l'empire byzantin et en Occident*, vol. 1; most of the churches mentioned by her on pp. 203–207 contain scenes from the infancy of Mary, but not all of them the lactation scene.

[67] Nicole Thierry and Jean-Michel Thierry, "Eglise de Kizil -Tchoukour chapelle iconoclaste, chapelle de Joachim et d'Anne", in *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1958, vol. 50, pp. 105–146 and "Iconographie inédite en Cappadoce. Le cycle de la conception et de l'enfance de la Vierge a Kizil-Tchoukour", in *Akten des XI. Internationalen Byzantinistenkongressen München*, Munich, 1958, pp. 620–623, and N. Thierry, "L'iconographie capadocienne de l'affront fait à Anne d'après le Protévangile de Jacques", *Apocrypha* 7, 1996, pp. 261–272. Lafontaine-Dosogne, *Iconographie de l'enfance*, vol. 1, pp. 91–92, 122.

[68] N. Thierry and J. M. Thierry, "Eglise de Kizil-Tchoukour chapelle iconoclaste", pp. 105–146 and "Iconographie inédite en Cappadoce", pp. 620–623, and N. Thierry, "L'iconographie capadocienne de l'affront fait à Anne d'après le Protévangile de Jacques", in *Apocrypha* 7 1996, pp. 261–272 [6; 1996].

after the exemplar in Venice.[69] However, as we have shown above in this chapter, the representation of the Mariological cycle—sometimes also including the breastfeeding scene—was carried out until the end of the fourteenth century in churches from Southern Europe; further north, in Romania, this continued until the sixteenth century, but with no rendering of the breastfeeding.

Apparently this theme had once been among the most highly favoured in San Marco. Despite the fact that the mosaic visible today which, like the entire decoration in the south transept, replaces that made by Cicola and "is only preserved as a complete transformation of [that of] the late seventeenth century",[70] the representation of St. Anne breastfeeding has been perpetuated. Furthermore, it has been represented twice in this church and also in two different media—mosaic and wood. One wants to believe that the decision to keep it is consistent with Demus's statement that "The Venetians were never averse to repeating time and again what was held to be important".[71]

If St. Anne nursing scene was a part of the original eleventh-century decoration of San Marco, and the idea—attacked more and more today—that the church in the Blue Lagoon has commonalities with the *Apostoleion* Church in Constantinople is true (they have been compared as early as 1100[72]), then St. Anne nursing Mary might have also been an iconographic subject matter for the latter. Elsewhere I have written at some length about the issues touched upon here concerning the link between San Marco and the Church of the Apostles.[73] Regarding the shrine in Venice, as is known, there have been three churches on the site where the cathedral stands today or nearby.[74] Fabio Barry comments on their

[69] N. Thierry, *Haut Moyen-Age en Cappadoce: les églises de la région de Çavuşin*, Paris: Geuthner, 1994, vol. 2, p. 228.

[70] Demus (with a contribution by Rudolf M. Kloos), *The mosaic of San Marco in Venice: The eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Washington DC, Chicago and London: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984, vol. 1, p. 127. See also O. Demus (with a contribution by F. Forlati), *The Church of San Marco in Venice. History, Architecture, Sculpture*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Studies 6, 1960.

[71] Demus (with Kloos), *The mosaic of San Marco*, p. 22.

[72] Demus, *The mosaic decorations*, p. 5.

[73] Ene D-Vasilescu, "San Marco Basilica in the eleventh century", *Annuario dell'Istituto Romeno di Cultura e Ricerca Umanistica di Venezia*, forthcoming 2018.

[74] The first St. Mark Church was a temporary building within the Doge's Palace (actually nearby it, on the territory of the nunnery of St. Zacharia), erected in 828 when Venetian

architecture and decoration: "From the moment, in 828, that Venice abducted the remains of the apostle Mark from Alexandria, the construc-

merchants allegedly stole the supposed relics of Mark the Evangelist from Alexandria. The most important document about its foundation is the testament of the Doge Justinian Partecipacius (d. 829), preserved in a manuscript from the fourteenth century (printed in a complete form in A. Gloria, *Codice*, l, p. 12f. and Roberto Cessi (ed.), *Documenti relativi alla storia di Venezia anteriori al mille. Secoli V-IX*, 1, Padua: Tipografia del Seminario, 1940–1942, p. 93). It is also published in an abbreviated form in Ferdinando Ongania (ed.), *Documenti per la storia dell' augusta ducale Basilica di San Marco in Venezia dal nono secolo sino alla fine del decimo ottavo: dall' archivio di Stato e dalla Biblioteca Marciana in Venezia*, Venice: Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, 1886, p. 3, no. 20. The first church was replaced by a new one on its present site in 832; from the same century dates the first bell tower. The new church was burned in a rebellion in 976. The church was rebuilt in 978 and again in 1063 to form the basis of the present basilica. It was consecrated in 1084, the same year in which the body of St. Mark was supposedly rediscovered in a pillar by Vitale Faliero, doge at the time. The building also incorporates a low tower (now housing St. Mark's Treasure), believed by some to have been part of the original Doge's Palace. Within the first half of the thirteenth century, the narthex and the new façade were accomplished and most of the mosaics were completed. The presbytery is separated by an altar screen formed by eight red marble columns crowned with a high Crucifix and statues by Pier Paolo and Jacobello Dalle Masegne, masterpiece of Gothic sculpture (late fourteenth century). Behind the screen there are marble bannisters with bronze statues by Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570) which represent the Evangelists and Paliari's Four Doctors. Above the high altar containing St. Mark's relics, there is the canopy ("ciborium") supported by columns decorated with remarkable relieves; one of them contains the scene of St. Anne nursing discussed here. The altarpiece is the famous Pala d'Oro made by Byzantine masters. The new church was burned in a rebellion in 976 and rebuilt in 978 and again in 1063 to form the basis of the present basilica. Because of this succession of building work, more than one consecration took place; the most important of them was that from 1084. See O. Demus, *The mosaic decorations of San Marco*, p. 3 and *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History. History, Architecture, Sculpture* (with a contribution by Ferdinando Forlati), Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Papers 6, 1960, pp. 67–69, 88–100; Demus (with a contribution by Rudolf M. Kloos), *The mosaic of San Marco in Venice. I The eleventh and twelfth centuries*, Washington DC, Chicago, and London: Dumbarton Oaks Studies, University of Chicago Press, 1984, vol. 1; O. Demus, and Andaloro, M., *Basilica Patriarchale in Venezia. San Marco. I Mosaici. Le Iscrizioni. La Pala D'Oro*, Milano: Fabbri Editori, 1991; Otto Demus, Wladimiro Dorigo, Antonio Niero, Guido Perocco, and Ettore Vio, *Patriarchal Basilica in Venice. San Marco. The Mosaics. The History. The Lighting*, Milan: Fabbri, 1990; O. Demus, *The Mosaic Decoration* of *San Marco*, *Venice*, edited by H. L. Kessler, Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988, and the other works he published on San Marco; for other periods see especially his study *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice* mentioned above, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984, which has four volumes. See also Maria Da Villa Urbani, *La Basilica di San Marco*, Venice: Storti Edizioni, 2001; Sabina Vianello (ed.), *Le chiese di Venezia*, Rome: Electa, 1993.

tion and adornment of San Marco became an exercise in authentication by appropriation. Although the new palatine chapel built to house the saint's body had begun as an imitation of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, it was rebuilt in the image of the Apostoleion in Constantinople, where Constantine's dynasty had been laid to rest alongside the bodies of the apostles."[75] The majority of researchers still believe that the basilica's mosaics—at least the first ones—were made by masters from the Byzantine capital who were commissioned by Dominico Selvo (the doge in 1071–1084).[76] As mentioned above, Demus believes that the most important of the few consecrations of St. Mark's basilica took place in 1084. He thinks that it "would probably have concerned the main altar" and "if this is true, it may mean that the first decoration of the main apse was completed in 1084"[77] (i.e. "first decoration" in terms of mosaic; frescoes probably already existed on at least some of the walls of the church). Selvo would have commissioned Byzantine mosaicists to finish the decorative programme in time for this event.[78]

According to Demus, some of these masters were already in the area—they were involved, for instance, in renovating the cathedral on the island of Torcello—and what he says is logical. Comparison of the mosaics completed by the decorators of St. Mark's main porch with Byzantine mosaics of known age indicates "that the San Marco figures date from the last three decades of the eleventh century, perhaps even as early as about 1070. [...] Paleographically, the inscriptions can be divided into two groups. The older one can most likely be dated between 1060 and 1099."[79] The style in which the Venetian mosaics assigned by Demus to the eleventh century were executed has its closest parallel in the near contemporary (from before 1050) work on the Greek mosaics from the narthex of Hosios Loukas that depict the Apostles.[80] However, Liz James opens to debate

[75] Fabio Barry, "*Disiecta membra*: Ranieri Zeno, the Imitation of Constantinople, the *Spolia* Style, and Justice at San Marco", in Henry Maguire and Robert S. Nelson (eds.), *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010, [pp. 7–62], p. 7. See also his source: Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice: History, Architecture, Sculpture*, 67–69, 88–100.

[76] Demus, *The mosaic decorations of San Marco*, p. 3.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Demus, *Mosaics of San Marco*, vol. 1, p. 292.

[79] O. Demus, W. Dorigo, A. Niero, G. Perocco, and E. Vio, *Patriarchal Basilica in Venice*, p. 19.

[80] Idem, p. 18.

whether it is certain that the artists who ornamented the basilica were from the Empire and questions the correlation between their ethnicity and their craft: "In an Italian context, the question of whether mosaicists were Greek or Venetian or generically Italian seems to come down, in scholarly analysis, to what bit of mosaic is being discussed. The implication is always that the Byzantine-looking mosaics are the work of Byzantine mosaicists and the others are not. This may not be the best way to consider the question. Documentary evidence for Greek mosaicists at San Marco is almost non-existent. Renato Polacco claims that documents state that doge Orselo employed a mosaicist from Constantinople. Demus does not mention this, but says that later chronicles relate that Selvo brought a mosaic master from Constantinople. In 1153, a Marcus Grecus is recorded in documents as a mosaicist but, as Demus indicates, there is no evidence as to whether or not he worked on the mosaics of San Marco."[81]

I. C. Freestone, M. Bimson, D. Buckton, L. James, and other researchers studied and documented the production of *tesserae* locally.[82] As a conclusion to their efforts James states: "Whether the Venetians possessed the skill of making colored glass in the eleventh century is uncertain. If they did not, then the easiest way to get glass for the manufacture of tesserae would have been to obtain already coloured glass as cakes, or as sheets or even as tesserae."[83] She also considers that by the twelfth century the Venetians could have been producing their own coloured glass tesserae; James justifies her opinion using the results of an analysis carried out at San Marco by a team from the British Museum. The specialists from

[81] Liz James, "Mosaic Matters. Questions of Manufacturing and Mosaicists in the Mosaics of San Marco, Venice", in Maguire and Nelson, *San Marco. Byzantium and the Myths of Venice*, [pp. 227–243], p. 232 and "Byzantine glass mosaic tesserae: some material considerations", in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2006), pp. 29–47. See also Demus, *Mosaics of San Marco*, vol. 1, p. 292; Renato Polacco "Lo stile dei mosaici medievali di Venezia", in Clementina Rizzardi (ed.), *Venezia e Bisanzio: Aspetti della cultura artistic bizantina da Ravenna a Venezia (V-XlV secolo)*, Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed. arti, 2005, pp. 457, 458, 460, 465, and I. Andreescu-Treadgold, "I primi mosaicisti a San Marco", in R. Polacco (ed.), *Storia dell'arte marciana: l'architettura*, Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi: Venezia, 11–14 Ottobre 1994/The Proceedings of the international conference of Venetian studies, Venice: Marsilio Publ., 1997, pp. 105–122.

[82] James, "Mosaic Matters", p. 232.

[83] I. C. Freestone, M. Bimson, and D. Buckton, "Compositional Categories of Byzantine Glass Tesserae", in *Anales du ll congrès de l' association international pour l'histoire du verre 1988*, Basel, 1988, pp. 271–280. See also I. C. Freestone, *Things that Travelled: Mediterranean Glass in the First Millennium AD*, London: UCL Press, 2018.

London have found out that these decorative pieces (tesserae) at the Venetian cathedral were made from a typical Western European glass—high potash, lime, and silica—in contrast to the soda-lime-silica glass being manufactured in the Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, it seems that the masters who embellished San Marco after the twelfth century were locals and those who worked before that time came indeed from Byzantium; some of the latter might have trained apprentices who lived in Venice. There is also the possibility that Venetian people were sent to Byzantium to learn the craft of making and laying mosaic. This is actually Demus's opinion regarding the authorship of the decoration in the churches situated in the Blue Lagoon. He posits that "[Venetian] artists seem to have received their training in Byzantium around the middle of the eleventh century".[84] In any case, the new findings offer additional evidence for the view that during the eleventh–twelfth centuries mosaicists, craftsmen, and also artistic motifs circulated between the two [cities] and across the Mediterranean at large. The most famous outcome of such interactions consists (according to Demus, Barry, and other scholars) in the already stated similarities between San Marco and the Church of the Apostles in the Byzantine capital. The results of new research on San Marco came out recently;[85] this, while presenting arguments especially for the connection between the images representing Genesis on the Cotton manuscript in London[86] and the decoration containing this biblical subject in the 110

[84] Demus et al., *Patriarchal Basilica in Venice*, pp. 18–19.

[85] Martin Büchsel, Herbert L. Kessler, and Rebecca Müller (eds.), *Das Atrium von San Marco in Venedig: Die Genese der Genesismosaiken und ihre mittelalterliche Wirklichkeit/*The Atrium of San Marco in Venice: The Genesis and Medieval Reality of the Genesis Mosaics, German-English texts, (Papers from a symposium held at Bad Homburg, Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften, 22–23 June 2012), Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2014.

[86] "The Cotton Genesis" (London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B VI) is a fourth- or fifth-century Greek copy of the Book of Genesis. Its text is written on 35 parchment leaves (size about 27 × 22 cm), with numerous lacunae. Most of it was destroyed in the Cotton library fire in 1731, leaving only 18 charred, shrunken scraps of vellum. It was a luxury codex with many miniatures (between 250 and 300, cf. M. Wenzel). From the remnants, the manuscript appears to have had more than 440 pages with approximately 340–360 framed illustrations inserted into the columns of the text. Many miniatures were copied in the seventeenth century and are now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (Ms. fr. 9530). Presumably the codice was brought to Venice following the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204. It arrived in England, brought by two Greek bishops, and was acquired by Sir Robert Cotton in the seventeenth century. His collection passed to the British Museum. See Marian Wenzel, "Deciphering the Cotton Genesis miniatures: prelimi-

mosaic panels San Mark's porch (atrium) mentioned earlier, has not brought new information to establish with certainty that Anna breastfeeding Mary was a part of the ornamental programme in Constantinople and the early church in Venice.

We shall, in the next chapter, give more details about the Bogomils. More arguments will also be brought in favour of the thesis that the innovation that Anne breastfeeding scene represented in liturgical art occurred as a counter-reaction to the emergence of their sect in Bulgaria and to the dissemination, via the Egnatian Way, of their ideas throughout the rest of the Byzantine Empire and in other parts of Europe.

nary observations concerning the use of colour", *British Library Journal*, 1987, pp. 79–100; Kurt Weitzmann and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis: British Library, Codex Cotton Otho B VI*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986; K. Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, New York: George Braziller, 1977; K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of spirituality: late antique and early Christian art, third to seventh century: exhibition catalogue*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, nos. 408–409; Constantin von Tischendorf, *Monumenta sacra inedita,nova collectio sive reliquiae antiquissimae textus Novi*, Leipzig, 1857, XIII, XXII–XXXVI; F. W. Gotch, *Supplement to Tischendorf's Reliquiae cod. Cotton*, London, 1881; *Ernst Würthwein, Der Text des Alten Testaments, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1988, p. 85;* Alfred Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments, für das Septuaginta-Unternehmen*, Göttingen, 1914, pp. 107–108; *Henry Barclay Swete, An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, Cambridge:* Macmillan and Co., *1902, pp. 109–110;* Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An introduction to the critical study of the Holy Scriptures*, New York, 1852, vol. 1, pp. 226, 236; Robert G. Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages*, Ithaca, N. Y., Cornell University Press, 1983.

CHAPTER 8

The Bogomils and Iconography

Images of the Mother of God breastfeeding, as observed, occurred as a variation of *Eleusa* type. They are much more common than those representing *Anna lactans* and were circulated beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire, where they first appeared. For instance, Anthony Cutler gives examples from Italy.[1] As also noticed, once the homilies popularised hypothetical details concerning the parents of *Theotokos*, St. Anne and Joachim entered also Byzantine iconography.

The permissibility to disseminate representations of the human body in church iconography—and of female breasts in particular—between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries was, as stated, a reaction by the painters (and/or of their patrons, who ordered such works) to the theology of the Bogomils. A holy woman nursing was the quintessence of the idea of the bodily and heavenly coming together since the biologically produced milk points to the Divine nourishment, and Christ himself was "a Mother".[2] Moreover, because *Maria lactans* scenes were already known, a novelty was needed to surprise and, by this means, to make the theological point more evident—hence the depictions of St. Anne. The Bogomil

[1] Cutler, "The Cult of *Galaktotrophousa* in Byzantium and Italy", in *Byzantium, Italy and the North. Papers on Cultural Relations.*

[2] C. Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984 (first edition 1982).

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_8

doctrine constituted everything that is opposed to what the reality of a woman breastfeeding signifies; to demonstrate this, we have to present some of its tenets.

8.1 The Bogomils

In about 950 Tsar Peter I (927–969),[3] the son of Simeon I of Bulgaria, wrote two letters to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Theophylact Lekapenos (917–956; in office 933–956)[4] asking for theological details regarding the Bogomils, a sect that emerged during his reign. This was a Gnostic social-religious movement that declared itself to be against the official Byzantine Church insofar as doctrine and way of life were concerned. Theophylact replied to his nephew-in-law and

[3] Petar/Peter—Simeon's son by his second marriage to Maria Sursuvul, the sister of George Sursuvul, a proeminent Bulgarian boyar. Peter had been born early in the tenth century, but it appears that his maternal uncle was very influential at the beginning of his reign, when he was a Regent. In 913 Petar may have visited the imperial palace at Constantinople together with his older brother Michael. For unspecified reasons, Simeon had forced Michael to become a monk and had named Peter as his successor. To prove himself a worthy successor to his father both at home and in the eyes of foreign governments, Petar began his reign with a military offensive into Byzantine Thrace in 927. Nevertheless, he followed up his quick successes by secretly negotiating a peace treaty before the Byzantine government had a chance to retaliate. The Byzantine Emperor Romanos I Lakapenos eagerly accepted the proposal for peace and arranged for a diplomatic marriage between his granddaughter Maria and the Bulgarian monarch. In October 927 Peter arrived near Constantinople to meet Romanos and signed the peace treaty, marrying Maria on 8 November in the Church of the Zoödochos Pege. To signify the new era in Bulgaro-Byzantine relations, the princess was renamed Eirene ("peace").

[4] Theophylact was the youngest son of Emperor Romanos I Lakapenos by Theodora. Romanos I planned to make his son Patriarch as soon as Nicholas Mystikos died in 925, but two minor patriarchates and a two-year vacancy passed before Theophylact was considered old enough to perform his duties as patriarch (still he was only 16 years old). At this time or before he was castrated to help his career in the church. Theophylact was the third patriarch of Constantinople to be the son of an emperor and the only one to have become patriarch during the reign of his father. His patriarchate of just over 23 years was unusually long, and his father had secured the support of Pope John XI for his elevation to the patriarchate. Apart from the bastard eunuch Basil Lakapenos, who was appointed *parakoimomenos*, Theophylact was the only son of Romanos I to retain his high office after the family's fall from power in 945. Theophylact supported his father's policies and pursued ecclesiastical ecumenicism, keeping in close contact with the Greek patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch. In 948 he sent the monk Hierotheos as "bishop of Tourkis" to the Magyars, trying to help the efforts of imperial diplomacy in the late 940s. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, Hans Thurn edition, Berlin-New York: De Gruyter: CFHB, 1973, 239, pp. 67–68.

characterised the movement he was asked about as a dangerous heresy, a mixture of Manichaeism with "Paulism[5]", that is, "the teaching of Paul of Samosata, who was considered the founder of Paulicianism".[6] Malcolm Barber believes that the content of the letter depended much more upon Theophylact's doctrinal knowledge (or that of the intellectuals and theologians at his court, who probably drafted the letter) than on any direct experience/encounter with representatives of the sect and that "it is not absolutely certain that he is referring to the Bogomils".[7] The literature in the field states that the initiator of the Bogomil faction was either "Pope" Bogomil[8] or Jeremiah (who had the role of its "theoretician",

[5] The letter of Patriarch Theophylact of Constantinople to Tsar Peter of Bulgaria is now in the Ambrosian Library, Milan, MS. 270 E. 9. It is reproduced in Vasil Nikolov Zlatarski, *Istorii͡a na bŭlgarskata dŭrzhava prez srednite vekove*, vol. 1 part 2, Appendix Xl, pp. 804–805. Greek text in I. Dujčev, "L'epistola sui Bogomili del patriarca constantinopolitano Teofilatto", in *Melanges Eugène Tisserant*, vol. 2 (*Studi e testi* 232), Città del Vaticano, 1964, pp. 88–91. "The correspondence must have taken place before 954" (Malcolm Barber says "between 940 and 950", in his book The Cathars: Dualist heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages, London and New York: Longman, 2000, p. 13 because that year Patriarch Theophylact had a horse riding accident after which he was unable to work; he died two years later). Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947 (last edition 1999), pp. 67–68. See also S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus The Lecapenus and His Reign: A Study of Tenth-century Byzantium*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. (Some sources claim that references to the correspondence between the two are in PG 123–126, but these volumes are referring toTheophylact of Ohrid, Patriarch of Bulgaria between 1078 and 1107, who also struggled against Paulician and Bogomil sects).

[6] Alexander P. Kazhdan (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, vol. 3, p. 2068.

[7] Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies in The Byzantine World, c. 650–c. 1450*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998, no. 10, pp. 98–102. See also Barber, The Cathars, p. 13.

[8] Dimitri Obolensky, "The Bogomils", reprint from *Eastern Churches Quarterly*, 1945, p. 1; see also his book *The Bogomils: A study in Balkan Neo-Manicheism*, Cambridge University Press, 1948 (reprinted by AMS Press, New York, 1978), p. 119. Barber, The Cathars, footnote 14 on p. 13 says that Bogomil "may have been" an adopted name meaning "beloved of God". But it is no doubt about this as Obolensky affirms in The Bogomils, p. 120. The British-Russian scholar explains (on p. 119) how Zigabenus gave a false etimology to the word Bogomil and also the fact that the name of the Bogomil leader "Bogomil" ("beloved of God") is the Slavonic translation of the Greek Theophilus. The name indeed "was prevalent in Bulgaria even before the time of Tsar Peter". Obolensky, The Bogomils, p. 120, as Milan Loos, Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages, Prague: Academia and The Hague: Distributed by Nijhoff, 1974, n. 47 on pp. 65, repeats this, saying that it was "a common personal name of the time". The view which has sometimes been expressed that

adapting existent literature in order to serve the propagandistic purposes of the priest Bogomil),[9] or both of them.[10]After Bogomil, their most-known leader was Basil.[11] The members of this religious faction were known as Bulgari (българи), Bulgarians, Babuni, or Paterenes[12]; they dispersed themselves widely in the countries to the south of the Danube (in Thracia), where they had a longer existence than in Bulgaria itself; they also reached Rus' and, in the twelfth century, Western Christendom—here some people identified them with the Cathars[13] called sometimes

there was no such figure can be dismissed, see Dimitre Anguelou, Le Bogomilisme en Bulgarie, trans. L. Pétrova-Boinay, Toulouse: Privat, 1972; originally 1969, p. 49 and Henri-Charles Puech et André Vaillant, *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1945, pp. 283–289, who thinks it is very unlikely that a mythical figure would have developed so soon after his alleged death.

[9] Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, Appendix II, pp. 271–275; Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, pp. 81–87. The latter says that "By the time of Athanasius of Jerusalem the Bogomils were known to be reading works by a certain priest Jeremiah" (p. 81).

[10] Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, Appendix II, p. 271; Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, pp. 81, 84.

[11] Basil was condemned in c. 1098 in the Comnenian heresy trial, according to Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies*, no. 26, p. 207.

[12] Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*; he has an entire chapter dedicated to the "Patarenes", pp. 94–115.

[13] Cathars first appeared in the historical record in the Languedoc region of France and other parts of Europe in the eleventh century and flourished in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They became known also as the Albigensians as they gained many adherents in the city of Albi and surrounding area in the twelfth and thirteenth century. At that time, the line between zealous reformed and heretics was difficult to draw and depended to some extent on the attitude of local bishops. M. D. Costen think that perhaps a variety within Christianity was useful in order to delineate the true "Orthodoxy" of the church. Michael D. Costen, *The Cathars and Albigensians Crusade*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. 118. In 1208, Pope Innocent III attempted to use diplomacy to end Catharism, but in that year, his legate Pierre de Castelnau was murdered while returning to Rome. This prompted Innocent into action and that resulted in the Albigensian Crusade (1209–1229), of which beginning was marked by his Bull issued on the 9 October 1208. On this, see especially Robert I. Moore, *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom (Pivotal Moments in World History)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. See also Antoine Dondaine OP, *Un traité neo-manichéen du XIIIe siècle: Le Liber de duobus principiis, suivi d'un fragment de rituel Cathare* [in France], Institutum Historicum Fratrum Praedicatorum Rome, 1939; Michael Frassetto, *Heretic Lives: Medieval Heresy from Bogomil and the Cathars to Wyclif and Hus*, London: Profile, 2007 and M. Frassetto (ed.), *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore*, Leiden: Brill, 2006 for a consideration of the origins of the Cathars and proof against identifying earlier heretics in the West, such as those existent in 1025 at Monforte, outside Milan, as being Cathars. Also see Walter Wakefield and Austin P. Evans (eds.), *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, a col-

Albigensians because many of their ideas were similar. (Cathars were mistakenly considered an offshoot of the Bogomils, or at least, it was believed that their ideas "played a role in the formation of western Catharism"[14]). The Bogomils were oppressed everywhere they lived, including Constantinople. For instance, on 11 February 1211 a meeting of the Synod of the Bulgarian Church was convened by Tsar Boris in order to condemn the members of the Bogomil sect. The gathering took place in the capital, Tarnovo[15] (very probably as a consequence of an immediately prior visit to Bulgaria by a Cardinal-legate sent by Pope Innocent III[16]). At the same time, when the Bogomil faith began to spread to Serbia at the end of the twelfth century, king Stefan Nemanja organised a Church Council against them (reproduced in a fresco from 1290 that has survived), tortured their leaders, and forbade any practice deriving from their belief. As a consequence, many of them migrated to Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia.[17] By the thirteenth century they

lection of pertinent documents on Western heresies of the High Middle Ages. Also Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, *Montaillou: the Promised Land of Error*, trans. Barbara Bray, New York: George Braziller, 1979 (a serious analysis of the social context of last French Cathars), and Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity*, William M. Johnston (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000, vols. 1–2; Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Malcolm Barber, *The Cathars. Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages*, London: Longman, 2000, pp. 103–104; N. Garsoïan, "Byzantine Heresy: A Reinterpretation", *DOP* 25, 1971, pp. 87–113, and Averil Cameron, "How to Read Heresiology", in the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33, no. 3, 2003, pp. 471–492. More general literature on the heresies within Christianity: St John of Damascus, "On Heresies", in *Saint John of Damascus: Writings, Fathers of the Church*, vol. 37, Frederic H. Chase Jr. (trans.), Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1958, p. 125; Ph. Schaff and H. Wace (eds.), H. R. Percival (trans.), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 14: I Nice AD 325 [Canons of the Council of Nicaea], New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900, reprinted Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012, p. 20; Mark Gregory Pegg, "On Cathars, Albigenses, and good men of Languedoc", *Journal of Medieval History* 27 (2), 2001, pp. 181–195; Murphy Cullen, *God's Jury: The Inquisition and the Making of the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane, 2012, pp. 26–27; Carol Thysell, *The Pleasure of Discernment: Marguerite de Navarre as Theologian*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, and John Van Antwerp Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: a critical survey from the sixth to the late twelfth century*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991.

[14] Barber, The Cathars, p. 2.

[15] M. I. Popruzhenko (ed.), *Sinodik tzarja Borila* [The Synod of Tsar Boris], Sofia: Société historique de Sofia, 1928; see also Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, p. 95.

[16] Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, p. 95

[17] Oto Bihalji-Merin and Alojz Benac, *The Bogomils*, London: Thames and Huston, 1962, pp. IX–X.

were known in the West and perhaps had connections with the religious groups in that part of Europe.[18] In spite of all repressive measures, the sect remained strong and popular until the fall of the Second Bulgarian Empire at the end of the fourteenth century.

The fact that the answer given by Patriarch Theophylact to Tsar Peter I has survived is of great importance, since the books and other documents owned by the Bogomils were burnt[19] and only few contemporary accounts of their beliefs are still extant. One is that provided by the Bulgarian Orthodox priest Kosma[20] and another by Anna Comnena. The latter is obviously a biased testimony since the author's opinions were formed under the impact of the persecutions her father, Alexius I Comnenus,[21] organised against the representatives of the Bogomils.[22] There is also information transmitted by the monk Euthymius Zygabenus/Zigabenus, who was ordered by the same emperor to provide a systematic description of the ideas propagated by the heresies that existed in the Empire and to refute them in writing.

He was particularly requested to focus on the Bogomils.

[18] For a map regarding the dispersion of the Bogomils along the *Via Egnatia* and their connection with groups in the rest of Europe, see for instance https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bogomilism#/media/File:Bogomilist_expansion.svg

[19] Bihalji-Merin and Benac, *The Bogomils*, p. IX.

[20] Cosma/Kosma, *Slovo Kozmyi*, M. I. Popruzhenko (ed.), *Sinodik tzarja Borila*; A. Vaillant, "Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosma le Prêtre", in H.-C. Puech, Paris, 1945; he dates Cosma's work to 972 (on. pp. 19–24). See also Émile Turdeanu, "Apocryphes bogomiles et apocryphes pseudo-bogomiles", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. 138, no. 1, 1950, pp. 22–52, Endre von Ivánka, "Gerardus Moresanus, der Erzengel Uriel und die Bogomilen", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol. 21, nos. 1–2, 1955, p. 143–146 (= Miscellanea Georg Hofmann SJ); this is about the Life of St. Gerard of Transylvania, eleventh century, which relates that the Bogomils venerated particularly Archangel Uriel; D. Radeva, "Pavlikianskiat dualizam—arhetipi i povtorenia", *Istoria* (Sofia), vols. 4–5, 1998, pp. 54–60; M. Zerner, "Du court ou on appela les heretiques des 'bougres'. Et quelques deductions", *Cahiers de civilisation medieval*, vol. 4, 1989, pp. 305–324; H. Bartiakian, "Za spomenatia v Ustava na Grigorii Bakuriani 'Anidryton ethnos'", *Duhovna kutura* (Sofia), vol. 4, 1981, pp. 25–30. (This article is about the Typikon of the Bachkovo monastery in Southern Bulgaria founded by Gregory Bakuriani in 1084 which mentions the local Paulicians); P. Pavlov and V. Grudkov, *Prizvani da prosiaiat … Zhitia na sv. Patriarch Joakim I Tarnovski, sv. Isai Serski i sv. Patriach Efrem Pechki*, Veliko Tarnovo, 1999, pp. 77–78; this is about the life of the Bulgarian St. Ephrem, d. 1400, who was the Patriarch of Serbia; he had a dispute with a "Messalian" Bogomil.

[21] Alexius I Comnenus reigned in 1081–1118.

[22] Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, xv, ed. Possinus, Paris, 1651, p. 490; this is the edition used in J-P. Migne, PG. 131. See also D. Reinsch and A. Kambylis (eds.), *CFHB* 40/1, Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2001.

Zygabenus did so and the result of his work is the famous *Panoplia Dogmatica* in which he has a part dedicated to the latter sect.[23] Here he explains the Bogomil concept of Divinity and the dualistic position held by the members of this sect:

> God [who] is good. [...] poured forth from His heart a Word, this is His Son, God [who] is more divine than all the angels [and he was called] Jesus because he heals all disease and weakness [and] Christ as anointed with flesh. [He] took on flesh which in appearance was physical and like a human body, *but in reality was immaterial and godlike*. [...] He accomplished the plan of the Incarnation and taught what is set out in the Gospels. He was crucified and died.[24]

Then, "appearing to rise again, he [...] imprisoned the rebel" who, according to the Bogomils, was the evil principle, Satanael, who "tricked" God at the creation of the world and slipped into the world. After "He had fulfilled the duty laid upon him, he [Christ] returned to the Father and sat at his right hand on the throne of Satanael, who had been cast down. Then he returned whence he came, and was dissolved back into the Father, in whose womb he had been enclosed in the beginning. When he taught his disciples in the world, he gave them the Holy Spirit, that is, the apostolic teaching."[25] What the members of the sect imply is that Jesus Christ was the Son of God only through grace, like any other prophet. Referring to their doctrine, Dimitri Obolensky explains why it is non-incarnational: "The Logos was for them not the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Eternal Word incarnate, but merely the spoken word of God, manifested in the oral teaching of Christ."[26] The Bogomils accepted most of the Christian writings and also recognised some of the apocrypha; they called for a return to early Christianity and recognised The Lord's Prayer, which they said four times a day and four times at night.[27] But they did

[23] Euthymius Zygabenus, "Panoplia Dogmatica", *PG* 130, XXVII, col. 1289–1317. Its complete title is *Narratio de Bogomilis: seu Panopliae dogmaticae titulus XXIII/ Narratio* [*de Bogomilis*], in Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton, with Yuri Stoyanov (eds.), *Christian Dualist Heresies in The Byzantine World, c. 650–c. 1450*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998, no. 52, pp. 205–206. See also E. Zygabenus, *Narratio de Bogomilis*, Johann Carl Ludwig Gieseler (ed.), Göttingen: Vandenbroek et Ruprecht, 1842; and Saška Bogevska-Capuano, "The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in the Second Half of the thirteenth century", *Patrimonium*, 2012, vol. 10, [pp. 139–173], especially pp. 155–156.

[24] Zygabenus, "Narratio", in Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies*, no. 52, pp. 205–206; emphasis added.

[25] Idem, p. 206.

[26] Obolensky, The Bogomils, p. 211.

[27] Cosma, *Slovo Kozmyi*, p. 45.

not use icons in their rituals and some of their ceremonies were similar to those of the Cathars and Albigens.

Probably the practice of the Inquisition to generally qualify many religious factions by the term "heretical" made it possible for the "Bogomils" and "Cathars" to be sometimes taken to mean the same thing. In any case, according to Barber, the entry into the Cathar elite "was through the ceremony of the *consolamentum*, the essential elements of which the westerners had received from the Bogomil missionaries".[28] Since the origins of the Bogomil movement and the proliferation of its ideas, as well as the iconographical responses to those phenomena, were Southern European realities, there is no need to provide more information about the Cathars of France, Belgium, and Italy than we have already done. However, a point relevant to our discussion can be made with respect to Michael Costen, who shows that in the twelfth-century Languedoc (south of France), where the Cathars were first recorded, the "expression of sexuality by women was regarded as dangerous, as at most times in European history".[29]

As noted, for the Bogomils the spiritual is elevated strongly to the detriment of the material, and because of this they disregard the human body and the Church as the body of Christ; this is why they did not build churches but worshipped outdoors. In any event, a scene as corporeal as that of a woman breastfeeding (in this case St. Anne), whether represented in literature or in images, would have not been central to their preoccupations, especially since the Bogomil leaders were celibates and we can probably infer from this fact that they had a low regard for sex. Because of their belief that the earthly biological life was sinful, they fasted rigorously in some periods of the year and rejected anything socially created that does not come from the soul, which in their view was the only divine possession of humans. They did not eat meat and did not drink wine, preferred celibacy to marriage, and confess and gave absolution to each other, regardless of their sex.[30]

[28] Costen, *The Cathars and Albigensians Crusade*, p. 76.

[29] Costen, *The Cathars and Albigensians Crusade*, p. 49. He uses information from a study on the twelfth society in that geographical area by John Hine Mundy, *Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars*, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Toronto, 1990, pp. 39–72; 103–104. See also Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple (eds.), *Women of the medieval world: essays in honor of John H. Mundy*, Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1985.

[30] I have gathered this mainly from Cosma, *Slovo Kozmyi*, pp. 3, 6, 37, 22, 40, 45; Zygabenus, *Narratio,* Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist* Heresies, p. 206; Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, p. 74.

The Bogomils not only denied that the sacraments of the Church had validity, but they did not recognise the state, the Church as an institution, or any hierarchy. For these reasons they refused to pay taxes.

Because of the commonalities between the Bogomils and the Cathars, and the fact that Bernard of Clairvaux—who is already familiar from Chap. 3—opposed the latter group, it is important perhaps to recall here the Council of Troyes. It was organised in 1128–1229 against the Cathars at the initiative of the aforementioned mystic who strongly believed in the Mother of God and the spiritual as well as the physical healing power of milk. St. Bernard elaborated the theological doctrine of "Bridal Mysticism" (communicated in the sermons he wrote and delivered—many of them commenting on the Lord's Nativity and on the Song of Songs).[31] Innocentius II (Pope in 1130–1143) was very close to Bernard; it is thus possible that his policy favourable to ideas directly connected with motherhood and its spiritual side were issued under the saint's influence. Through the concept mentioned above, Bernard went into the details (or perhaps beyond?) of what is conveyed through the New Testament dogma that the church as a whole is the bride of Christ; peculiarly, he saw everyone in the church, men as well as women, as having feminine characteristics. According to him, every believer should mystically become the "Bride of Christ". This notion and his teaching on Mary elevated the status of women and ascribed spiritual value to femininity; it is, therefore, not surprising that he did not like the Cathar doctrine, which "made the Virgin Mary a figure of little importance". He knew that "Many of the Cathars accepted the Bogomil view" that did not hold the Mother of God in high esteem.[32] Masculinity with its aggressive and competitive urges was perceived by Bernard as inherently unspiritual. Men were therefore told to abandon their masculine nature as being inimical to spirituality and to adopt the feminine mindset of a receptive vessel for the grace of God.[33] For

[31] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Nativity*, Chicago, Dublin, London: Scepter Publishers, 1959; *St. Bernard's sermons on the Nativity*, trans. by a priest of Mount Melleray, Devon: Augustine Publishers, 1985, and Bernard of Clairvaux, *On baptism and the office of bishops, on the conduct and office of bishops, on baptism and other questions: two letter-treatises*, Pauline Matarasso (trans.), introductions by Martha G. Newman and Emero Stiegman, Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2004.

[32] Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947 (last edition 1999), pp. 149–150.

[33] Somehow puzzling, Bernard de Clairvaux is the writer of codes of conduct for men monks (lay, "civilian" as well as military), such as that of the Knights of the Temple. For

example, Bernard urged his male monks to "let your breasts swell with the milk of compassion". He told everyone, man and women alike, "if you fill your soul with the food of God's words, if faithfully, even unworthily, and with all the devotion of which you are capable, you receive that Bread which came down from heaven and gives life to the world, that is, the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the glorified flesh of the Resurrection may renew and strengthen the old wineskin which is your body, which thus renewed will be able to hold the wine in it; if, finally, you live by faith, and if you never have to admit with tears that you have forgotten to eat your bread, then you will have become a Bethlehem, worthy indeed to receive the Lord into you."[34] (He was playing on words here: Bethlehem means "house of bread" in Hebrew.) St. Bernard's ideas and writings contributed to the veneration of Mary, even though in his Letter 174 he reproves the idea that that she was born without the original sin; there Bernard refers to Mary's ancestors.[35] It was no less than 700 years later that Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) officially formalised the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Mother of God making it the authorised position of the Catholic Church. He declared that Mary was a "perpetual virgin".

among the 72 clauses of his Latin Rule (enriched later), conceived for its members by Bernard, there were some asking them not to have physical contact of any kind with women, even members of their own family, to eat meat no more than three times per week, and to take their meals in silence. Perhaps the saint believed that only in this way could the aggressiveness of masculinity be redressed. This set of instruction was conceived at the request of the founder of this military order initially from Palestine that was established after the First Crusade, in which control of the city of Jerusalem was regained from the Muslims. The Knights were dedicated to the defence of pilgrims and the support of the Crusaders in the Holy Land. The existence of the order and of their "Rule" was ratified at the Council of Troyes, in 1128–1129. The principles of this documents were based on those of another code of behaviour—that of the Order of Chivalry, with which Bernard de Clairvaux was also involved. In 1118, at the request of its leader, Hugues de Payens, the Order of Chivalry was established "in honour of Our Lady" to guard the pilgrim routes to the Holy Land. Actually, both codes are based on the rule of St. Benedict used for Bernard's Cistercian monks. In 1139, by issuing the bull *Omne Datum Optimum* at the Lateran, Pope Innocent II's reconfirmed the Latin Rule, thus defining the ideal behaviour of the day. See Edward Burman, *The Templars: Knights of God*, Rochester: Destiny Books, 1990, p. 40. Throughout his 1139 bull, the Pope also exempted the Order from obedience to local laws. This ruling meant that the Templars could pass freely through all borders, were not required to pay any taxes, and were exempted from all authority except his own. Barber, *The Cathars*; Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *The Templars: Selected sources translated and annotated by Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002.

[34] *St. Bernard's sermons on the Nativity*, pp. 6–7.

[35] Bernard of Clairvaux, "Letter 174" in Epistolae, vol. 1 (1–180), *Santi Bernardi opera* [*OB*], vol. 7, eds. J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, pp. 388–392.

After Innocentius II and Bernard of Clairvaux's time, between 1198 and 1255, the Bulgarian king, the Bishop of Bosnia (Kaloian), and Basil, the Archbishop of Zagora, as well as other local rulers and prelates, wrote about the heresies in their lands firstly to Pope Innocentius III (c. 1160–1216; in office from 1198 to 1216), and then to other two pontiffs who succeeded him. Innocentius III replied and promised action against the Bogomils of Bosnia; the Pope had a rich correspondence with Emeric, King of Hungary and Croatia (1174–1204; 1182–1204), and with Vukan, the ruler of "Dalmatia and Dioclea", as the Pope calls him—in reality of the Serbian state of Duklja/Zeta.[36] The epistolary exchange with the latter had as its main subject Culinum/Kulin, the Bosnian Ban,[37] whom Vukan accused not only of harbouring heretics but of being one.[38] The Pope was already displeased with the activities of the Cathars in southern France, therefore sensitive to such matters, and in 1199 a Church Council was summoned in Bar to deal with such issues as priestly celibacy and beards; to these Vukan added heresy. Two legates from the Vatican were dispatched to Zeta, and Innocentius reinstituted the See of Bar (now in Montenegro).[39]Also, in 1203 he sent a delegation led by his chaplain, Johannes de Casamaris, to investigate the charges laid against the Ban of

[36] For various local rulers asking for papal guidance, see Alain Ducellier, *La façade maritime de l'Albanie au Moyen Age. Durazzo et Valona du XI-ème au XVème siècle*, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981, p. 139.

[37] Ban Kulin's name appears in a Cyrillic inscription from Biskupići-Muhašinovići (near Visoko), *c*. 1194. A second inscription was also found in Podbrežje near Zenica, which mentions Gradeša, a judge appointed by Kulin. A third Cyrillic inscription in Blagaj cites a contemporary župan, who is supposed to have built a church "in the days of the celebrated Nemanja". All three inscriptions have been published by Branko Fučić, "Croatian Glagolitic and Cyrillic epigraphs", in *Croatia in the Early Middle Ages. A Cultural Survey*, edited by Ivan Supičić, London/Zagreb: Philip Wilson Publishers/AGM 1999, pp. 277, 279.

[38] "Acta Innocentii PP. III (1198–1216)", in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, edited by J-P. Migne vol. 214; Theodosius Haluščynskyj (ed.), *Pontificia Commissio ad Redigendum*, Vatican, 1944; Tadija Smičiklas (ed.), *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Zagreb: Officina Societatis Typographicae, vol. 2, 1904; Gyula Moravcsik (ed.), Romilly J. H. Jenkins (trans.), *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando Imperio*, Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967; Cyril Mango, "The conciliar edict of 1166", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17, 1963, pp. 224–330.

[39] In 1089, the bishop of Bar had been elevated to Archbishop, when at the beginning of the twelfth century he was downgraded to a suffragan of the Archbishop of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), hence Innocentius's intervention in 1203. See Lothar Waldmüller, *Die Synoden in Dalmatien, Kroatien und Ungarn. Von der Völkerwanderung bis zum Ende der Arpaden (1311)*, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich: F. Schöningh Paderborn, 1987, p. 160.

Bosnia. Innocentius launched the Albigensian Crusade in 1208 with the strong support of King Philip II Augustus of France, and approximately 20,000 men, women, and children, Cathar and Catholic alike, were killed.[40] The conflict largely ended with the Treaty of Paris signed in 1229. Pope Gregory IX (c. 1145/70–1241; in office 1227–1241) continued his predecessor's efforts against the Bogomils by encouraging in 1238 Bela IV (King of Hungary and of Croatia 1235–1270) and Duke of Styria (1254–1258) in his wars "*contra gentem apostatricem, populum blasphemantem, haereticos* videlicet *et schismaticos terrae Assani, ipsumque Assanum Dei et Ecclesiae inimicu*".[41] Patriarch Germanus II of Constantinople (but in exile in Nicaea from 1223 until his death in 1240) was also concerned about the ideas held and spread by the Bogomils.[42] In the thirteenth century (1288) a new ruler, the Serbian king Stefan Dragutin (1253–1316; reigned 1276–1282 but retained Belgrade and other territories until his death), solicited Papal support against dualists who were infesting his realm.[43] Similar instances of appeal for help were common until the end of the period analysed in this book (the fourteenth century).

8.2 Bogomils and Iconography

Theological ideas have always been the basis of iconography, largely by agreement or, rarely, by antagonism—the latter was generally the case with the Bogomils. As already mentioned, these people were resistant to visual

[40] Pope Innocent III, "Regestorum Lib. XLL. Pontificatus Anno XLL, Christ 1209", *PL* 126. 139. See also Costen, *The Cathars and Albigensians Crusade*, p. 123; the number seems to be an exaggeration, cf. R. L. Wolff, *The Albigensians Crusade*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969, pp. 99–114.

[41] I. Dujčev, "II Francescanesimo in Bulgaria nei secoli XIII e XIV", in *Medioevo Bizantino-Slavo* 1, 1965, p. 396.

[42] Obolensky, *The Bogomils,* p. 230; for Germanos's details, see Kazhdan, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, p. 847.

[43] Augustin Theiner (ed.), *Vetera monumenta slavorum meridionalium historiam illustrantia, maximam partem nondum edita ex tabularis Vaticanis deprompta collecta ac serie chronologica disposita*, Rome: Typis Vaticanis and Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1863, vol. 1, pp. 77–82. Lothar Waldmüller, *Die Synoden in Dalmatien, Kroatien und Ungarn. Von der Völkerwanderung bis zum Ende der Arpaden (1311)*, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich: F. Schöningh Paderborn, 1987, p. 160.

Pope Innocent III, "Regestorum Lib. XLL. Pontificatus Anno XLL, Christ 1209", *PL* 126, 139. See also Costen, *The Cathars and Albigensians Crusade*, p. 123; the number seems to be an exaggeration, cf. R. L. Wolff, *The Albigensians Crusade*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

representations because of their religious principles. It should therefore be considered highly plausible that the occurrence of Anna *Galaktotrophousa* depictions within mainstream Christianity was a reaction to the Bogomil doctrine.

Nonetheless, in some of the areas in which the sectarians mentioned above lived, their ideas influenced the works of the iconographers within mainstream Christianity; creations which testify to this have survived. For example, as shown in the Preface, a specific rendition of the Trinity has been considered by Melina Paissidou and Saska Bogevska-Capuano to be a consequence of this state of affairs.[44] From Zygabenus's narration we know that for the members of the Bogomil sect, "The Father is presented as something with three faces, a monstrous being; the middle one is of human shape, from which man was created, 'according to His image and likeness' (Gen. 1.26). From each of the Father's temples shines forth a ray, that of the Son to the right and the Spirit to the left. So finally the Father becomes three-faced; before he had only one face."[45] Bogevska-Capuano indicates that the three-faced figure ("The tricefalous Trinity") from the Omorphokklesia Church seems to be exactly the image of the Bogomil "monstrous being" condemned by the Byzantines/Orthodox Christians.[46]

Other instances of images to illustrate the connection of theology-visual renderings—all of them, at least tentatively, indicating the conformity between the two—is provided by some of the researchers who

[44] Melina Paissidou, Η ανθρωπόμορφη *Αγία Τριάδα στον Άγιο Γεώργιο της Ομορφοκκλησιάς Καστοριάς, Αφιέρωμα στη μνήμη του Σωτήρη Κίσσα*, Thessaloniki, 2001, n. 21, pp. 391–392. The image they discuss is reproduced in M. Paissidou, *Η ανθρωπόμορφη Αγία Τριάδα*, figs. 3–4, and Saska Bogevska-Capuano, "The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of Ohrid", pp. 150–151, figs. 9–10. The latter's comments on the Bogomils are on pp. 155–156. Obolensky presents Zygabenus's description of the notion of Trinity as he thought the members of this sect saw it. The Russian-British author identifies two concepts ("or rather two separate aspects" of one) in the works of the Byzantine monk commissioned to report on them. The one presented above (Father, Son, and the Satanael) was well described by Michael Psellus in *Dialogus de daemonum operatione*. The second Trinity in Bogomil understanding consists in the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The representatives of the South-European sect under discussion here take the Son and the Holy Spirit to be names or emanations of the Father "[like] two rays proceeding from the two lobes of his brain". This kind of representation does not exist in any other source except Zygabenus's writings; Obolensky, *The Bogomils*, pp. 211–212.

[45] Zygabenus, "Naratio", in Hamilton and Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies*, no. 52, p. 206.

[46] Bogevska-Capuano, "The Holy Trinity in the Diocese of the Archbishopric of Ohrid", pp. 150–151, figs. 9–10. She comments on the Bogomils on pp. 155–156.

contributed to the volume *The Atrium of San Marco in Venice* mentioned earlier. Those who focus on the decoration in the Genesis mosaic from the porch of San Marco debate whether or not this *oeuvre* was inspired by Augustinian theology, and eventually they leave the matter still open to discussion.[47] Another example, even more obvious with respect to the reflection in iconography of phenomena taking place in theology, and which can be thought as a reaction to heretical positions, is the mosaic in the apse of the Cypriot Church of Panagia Kanakaria Lythrankomi that visually narrates the Christological cycle. This is considered by Marina Sacopoulo to be "an attempt to illustrate the two natures of Christ, who 'inserted' divinity into humanity, and is supposed to constitute the Orthodox response to the Monophysites".[48] Debates have also taken place in scholarship as to whether the decorations in St. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, reflect Arian or Nestorian ideas.[49] As far as our research has revealed, only the debate about the image of a clean-shaven human Christ has ceased; such a depiction was initially considered as being an Arian element in art, but during discussions it was observed that the same rendering exists in Nicene contexts. Other elements of the decoration in this basilica and their relation with (Arian) theology are still being examined. Some controversy on the issue of Arian characteristics in the mosaics of St. Agata Church in Rome has also taken place.[50]

Another instance of a place where a theology-iconography nexus was at work is offered by Nicole Thierry. That is *Kizıl Çukur*, where "The thirteen scenes of the story [about Mary's life] are exceptionally complemented

[47] Herbert L. Kessler, "Introduction", and the chapter "Thirteenth-Century Venetian Revisions of the Cotton Genesis Cycle", pp. 9–15, 75–95; Adam Seele, "Alexander Brungs", pp. 131–143; and Kathrin Müller, "Fragwürdige Bilder. Die Genesis mosaiken in Monreale/Problematic images. The Genesis mosaic in Monreale", pp. 231–247, in M. Büchsel, H. L. Kessler, and R. Müller (eds.), *Das Atrium von San Marco in Venedig/The Atrium of San Marco in Venice*, pp. 9–15.

[48] Marina Sacopoulo, *La Théotokos à la mandorle*, Paris, 1975, pp. 70–87; N. T. *HMÂC*, II, pp. 214, 235–236.

[49] A. Urbino, "Donation, Dedication, and *Damnatio Memoriae*: The Catholic Reconciliation of Ravenna and the Church of Saint's Apollinare Nuovo", *JECS* 13, 2005, [pp. 71–110], p. 88; R. M. Jensen, "The Economy of the Trinity at the Creation of Adam and Eve", *JECS* 7, 1991, [pp. 527–546], p. 528.

[50] Ralph W. Mathisen, "Ricimer's Church in Rome: How an Arian Barbarian Prospered in a Nicene World", in Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (eds.), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, Ashgate, Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015, pp. 307–325.

by a Virgin in the mandorla painted on the eastern tympanum, flanked by two inclined angels (pl. 37, fig. 88). Glory is an Old Testament attribute of the divinity (Ezek. 1, 28; 43, 4) and the extent to which it applies to the Mother of God is still being discussed."[51] In the same context, we should mention that Thierry conducts further the analysis of the frescoes from the churches she has studied in what is today Turkey and says that "The Cappadocian images are probably roughly contemporary with the Christological debate in question, even though they seem rather an illustration of the compromise Heraclius (610–641) [and the Church] worked out to calm the feelings [of the various religious factions]."[52] Her reflexion, which follows, can be considered a continuation of the argument from the beginning of Sect. 8.2 because, even though it is presented in the context of Late Antiquity/Medieval times, the principle it underlines is equally valid for every instance in which there is an immediate connection between theology and Church imagery. Thierry affirms with respect to a fact that we indicated earlier:

> "The historical cycle that exalted the miraculous character of the birth of Mary [in *Kizıl Çukur*, which she renders as *Kizıl Tchoukour*] was obviously a glorification of the human nature of Christ, but of human nature as willed by God. […] The two elements in this iconographical sequence seem to reflect the arduous Christological debates that the [Byzantine] empire was confronted with in the sixth-eighth centuries. During Heraclius's reign (610–641), the imperial power tried to impose *monoenergism* (the opinion that in Christ there are two natures, but only one energy), then *monothelitism* (the doctrine that there are two natures, but one will). These formulae failed to settle the argument in favour of either and would, ultimately, rekin-

[51] "Les treize scènes du récit sont complétes par une exceptionnelle Vierge dans la mandorle peinte sur le tympan oriental, encadrée par deux anges inclinés (*PL* 37, fig. 88). La gloire est un atribut vétérotestamentaire de la divinité (Éz. 1, 28; 43, 4) et son extension a la Mère de Dieu prête à discussion. On ne connaît qu'un autre exemple, la mosaïque chypriote de l'abside de la Panaghia Kanakaria de Lythrankomi attribuée au vie de Sauveur celle-ci est considérée comme un tentative illustration des deux natures du Christ, ce serait l'Humanité insérée dans la Divinité, une response orthodoxe aux Monophysites." N. Thierry, *La Cappadoce de l'antiquite*, au Moyen Âge (Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive 4), Turnhout: Brepols, 2002, p. 123.

[52] And "L'image cappadocienne est sans doute à peu près contemporaine des discussion christologiques en question, mains elle nous semble plutôt une illustration de compromis comme en élabora Héraclius (610–641) pour calme les esprits." N. Thierry, *La Cappadoce de l'antiquite*, p. 123.

dle the doctrinal debate."[53] The author then asks herself, "Were the painters who illustrated the official doctrine rather than the Orthodox one, and manifested originality in the [iconographic] programme of Kızıl Çukur, in search of a new [iconographic] terminology for their work?"[54]

I think the answer to that particular query is in the affirmative. The same goes for the iconographers that, theologically motivated, conceived the mosaic icon today on Mount Athos, or those who painted at Kurbinovo. They dared to include the breastfeeding scene in Church painting probable for the first time in the history of iconography. The icons and frescoes depicting ordinary aspects of life—such as that of St. Anne nursing—are a reflection of their creators' faith and courage. These artists-theologians (iconographers are understood to be both) knew how to illustrate the idea that the sacred meets the materiality of our body and thus made it part of their work. They permitted our corporeal activities and other pursuits belonging to daily life in "flesh and blood" (and milk), to aspire to and attain a kind of honour and sacredness. That is in accordance to what John Chrysostom says in the *Homily to the Galatians* 5: 22: "If the soul uses the body as it should, it makes itself more spiritual. But if it departs from the Spirit and yield itself to evil desires, it renders it more earthly."[55]

To supplement the list of examples regarding the theological-pictorial coupling offered so far, the politico-religious melange of the crusades, epitomised in a peculiarity that goes under the term "Crusader art" could, in its entirety, be considered. This mixture referred not only to liturgical

[53] "Le cycle historié (sic) [in *Kizıl Çukur/Tchoukour*] qui exaltait le caractère miraculeux de la naissance de Marie était évidement une glorification de la nature humaine du Christ, mais d'une nature humaine voulue par Dieu [...] Les deux éléments de cet ensemble nous paraissent refléter les âpres discussions christologique que connut l'empire du VI-VIII sieclè. A l'époque d'Héraclius (610–641), le pouvoir impérial chercha à imposer la *monénergisme* (dans le Christ, deux natures mais une seule énergie), puis le *monothélisme* (deux natures, une seule volonté), formules qui ne tranchaient pas entre le monophysisme et le dyophysisme et qui, finalment, relançaient les luttes doctrinales." N. Thierry, *Haut Moyen-Age*, vol. 1, pp. 235–236.

[54] "Les peintres de *Kizıl Tchoukur* cherchaient- ils à illustrer la doctrine officieller plutôt que l'orthodoxe et les originalités du programme sont-elles imputables au souci d'illustrer une nouvelle terminologie?", N. Thierry, *Haut Moyen-Age*, p. 236.

[55] John Chrysostom, "Homily to the Galatians" 5: 22, in PL 26. 418C and 419A. See also Mark J. Edwards (ed.), *Ancient Commentaries Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians*, gen. ed. T. C. Oden (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture vol. 8), Nottingham: InterVarsity, 2005, p. 89.

symbols and images, including a specific way of representing iconographically the cross, but also to architecture. The new reality behind this term was characterised by a combination of eastern and western features whose history in relation to maternal images (none, to our knowledge, referring directly to St. Anne) is summarised briefly in what follows. In the twelfth century, the pilgrims who travelled to the Holy Land under crusading rulers commissioned artists to paint affectionate scenes such as that of the Mother of God *Glykophilousa* enthroned; one such is portrayed on a column in the south aisle of the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem.[56] The Virgin *Glykophilousa* ("of the sweet kiss") is another subtype of *Eleusa* icons (just as *Galaktotrophousa* is); all these terms were traditionally applied to icons of the Mother of God, but since Anne (and Elizabeth) was also depicted with their children, gradually the specific usages of these words were extended to visual representations of other holy mothers. The picture from the example in Bethlehem imitates Byzantine art in the spiritualised and elongated form of the figures, the (imperial) costumes, and the setting of the *Theotokos* [on a throne]. But, as Jaroslav Folda indicates, within it "there are aspects of medieval Italianate painting as well". The emotional content that consists in the tenderness expressed by the mother for the baby seems to reflect a western attitude. This is the most important occidental feature, but "the strong linear clarity and the decorative design of the image [that] reflects the Italian ancestry of this painter"[57] is suggestive from this perspective as well. In addition, this image of the Virgin illustrates another aspect specific to "Crusader art"—the evocation of certain pilgrimage sites. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the cave of the Nativity in the same Biblical town were the preferred subjects of the painters in the period of the crusades. Even in the just-mentioned image, the two personages and the back of the throne are set against a stony grey cave entrance, just barely visible above the head of the Virgin; that motif brings to mind again the grotto of the Nativity. Below the red frame on either side there are three pilgrims knelt in prayer.[58] We know that the crusaders were also pilgrims and have observed how instrumental

[56] Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art. The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099–1291*, Lund Humphries/Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008, p. 28, fig. 9 in the respective book. The fresco of the Mother of God *Glykophilousa* enthroned was painted in 1139. Encaustic technique was employed; the height of the painting is 1.94 cm.

[57] Folda, *Crusader Art*, p. 28.

[58] Ibid.

they were, during their military wanderings, in the dispersal of St. Anne's relics from southern to northern Europe and in the dissemination of liturgical art in general.

In the context of discussing the consequences of the crusades for the circulation of the saints' cult, as well as of the visual renderings of those of them who are connected to the idea of spiritual nourishment, we shall remind ourselves that the correlations among ideas-images-texts were not exclusive to the Byzantine milieu. Even though I have not treated the subject in any detail, perhaps it is useful to emphasise here that I connect more generally the circulation of sentimental images of St. Anne, such as that of *Selbdritt* in France, Austria, and German and northern European lands, with the existence of the Cathars in those territories; as already pointed out, they were initially in contact with the Bogomils and shared some ideas with them. The fact that after the repression of the Cathars and the closure of the beguine communities with whom they were sometimes linked, *Anna Selbdritt* statues that were no longer carved constitutes evidence in support of this argument.

All exemplars provided above draw attention to "resonances" of theological phenomena in Church art either by endorsement or by counter-reaction. As a consequence of the Bogomil's ideas such as those outlined earlier, members of their sect were opposed to visual renderings of the holy and even more so to depictions of the human body. They had a minimalistic form of art which mirrored very few aspects of the world (in its mundane actuality), and even from this only a small sample has survived. Some of those are to be found in Bogomil cemeteries that still exist in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia. From what one can see in Oto Bihalji-Merin and Alojz Benac's book *The Bogomils*—and it seems that this is an exclusive publication on the little extant Bogomil art—their representations consisted in geometrical and vegetal motifs carved in stone; because the slabs bearing these drawings were/are near graves, an abstract contour of the deceased is sometimes also outlined. This is a very austere and stylised way of representing reality[59]; it is therefore easy to surmise that the depiction of the complex image of a holy woman suckling a child that allows her breast to be exposed would have been inconceivable to them.

[59] In Bihalji-Merin and Benac, *The Bogomils*, p. lX. In this book there are two chapters on art: "The stone carvings of the Bogomils" and "The medieval tombs of Bosnia and Herzegovina"; the latter presents Bogomil funerary stones.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

In order to bring to a close our thoughts on the importance of spiritual nourishment, the connection to sacred-profane, and the symbolism of milk, we shall recapitulate what Byzantine, Medieval Mediterranean, and European cultures with their Christian core presumed about them. We shall also remind the readers our remarks with respect to the literature and iconography representing St. Anne nursing and to how the latter was related through antagonism to the Bogomil doctrine.

We have found that one of the best ways of speaking about nurture in both its forms, biological and spiritual, is to employ an idea common to the Old and New Testaments as well as to Late Antiquity and medieval literature, including the apocrypha: God, especially through Christ, is the universal Nourisher. This notion is sometimes presented directly, at other times with subtlety. Obviously, in the New Testament and the literature around it, God the Father and Jesus Christ are central to the Eucharist but are also motherly figures. This fact made it easier for Mary's maternal characteristics and for those of some of the female saints, as Sts. Anne and Elizabeth, to enter theological discussions and iconographical concerns. St. Paul, Gregory of Nyssa, and John of Damascus among other important figures of the Church, as well as homilists like Andrew of Crete, St. Ephrem the Syrian, St. Romanos the Melode, who also wrote about St. Anne breastfeeding her daughter, familiarised their readers and the members of their congregations with these realities. They also maintained that the milk Mary offered to the Son of God did not originate in her own body and

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0_9

was of the same nature as that which He himself provides for people, even though popular piety holds that the Virgin had control over it. Mary was increasingly seen, with the pinnacle of this conviction in the Middle Ages, not only as a source of nutrition but also as an intercessor before God on behalf of people. Later a rich secondary literature, as that written by Bolman, Cunningham, Kimber Buell, Bynum, Nixon, and Skalova, has either supported or just commented on these ideas.

Concerning the act of maternal milk-feeding, a spiritual purpose is attributed to it, and this is seen by the authors of the Bible and by Church Fathers, hagiographers, and medieval mystics not only as a physical but also as a reality belonging to the sacred domain. This is the case, for example, in the *Song of Songs*, some of Paul's letters, John's Gospel, as well as in the writings of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), especially in his *Paedagogus* where he indicates that "Christ's milk"—the Logos—is the right nutriment to aid in attaining salvation. For Origen (184/185–253/254), the breasts in *Canticum Canticorum* are essential in apprehending the significance of the poem because they are the "governing principle" of the heart, and that the chant entails beliefs in connection to it, since this organ is the source of love. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395) ascribes the same significance to this piece of poetry. In his *Homilies on the Song of Songs* the fourth-century bishop expounds that the closeness of the Bridegroom's breasts to the heart is important because from this latter component of the human body "the breasts acquire their abundance of the divine milk on which, 'according to the proportion of faith' (Rom. 12:6), the soul feeds as it draws in grace".[1] In medieval times, mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Lutgarde of Aywières, Hadewijch of Antwerp, Anselm of Canterbury, and Richard Rolle of Hampole appreciated the spiritual value of motherly milk, especially that coming from Christ and Mary. Bynum is the researcher who comments most extensively on some of their experiences and on the connection to biological-spiritual nurture.

After describing the role St. Anne's cult played in women's religious fervour in Europe, and especially along the *Via Egnatia*, the book turned towards the representation of this saint breastfeeding her child as epitomised in Church art. The iconoclastic controversy was followed in Byzantium by a flourishing devotional piety, in which the human body began to be apprehended as a crucial instrument in the mundane-supernal

[1] Gregory of Nyssa, "Homily 1", in *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, p. 35.

interaction. With the arrival of dualistic ideas on the territories of the Byzantine Commonwealth,[2] that tendency was accentuated, breastfeeding was seen as one of the means to unite the biological with the spiritual, and visual renderings of suckling episodes not only became legitimate in the Church but also necessary in order to counter these novel concepts. We hope that the publication has demonstrated that our initial hypothesis with regard to the iconographical developments along the Egnatian Way in the theological context created by the spreading of Bogomil ideas has been confirmed. Between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries these changes happened in consequence of the existence in Europe of the trade routes (South-North, East-West) and because of the crusades and pilgrimages. But, as asserted, they were especially a response to the appearance of the Bogomils in Southern Europe and perhaps of the Cathars in the rest of the continent and to the proliferation of their ideas along the *Via Egnatia*, throughout the surrounding area, and further afield in Central and Northern Europe. When, as a reaction to these theological happenings, scenes depicting the intimate act of breastfeeding began to be represented, most Christians showed profound interest in what milk-nurture could mean not only in its plain biological dimension but also beyond this.

Iconographers worked and still do so in accordance to the notions provided by theologians, usually those belonging to mainstream Christianity, as most of the illustrations in our book testify. In addition to the depictions of St. Anne breastfeeding images, the "Embrace of the Apostles Peter and Paul" icon mentioned in the Preface constitutes good evidence from this point of view. As said, at the time of its conception and depiction, it represented a symbol of ecumenical peace and was linked with hopes raised at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (especially in its 1438–1439 phase) concerning a reunion of Orthodox and Catholic churches.[3] *The famous* Veneto-Cretan *painter Angelos Akotantos* (d. 1450) made a series of nearly identical icons on this subject matter around the time of the respective ecclesiastical gathering. Of the two specimens he signed, one is in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and has its lettering in Latin; that despite the fact that usually Angelos inscribed his works in Greek and that in general this type of Byzantine piece—certainly in that period—used the latter calligraphy.

[2] Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

[3] Giuseppe Alberigo (ed.), *Christian unity: the Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438/9–1989*, Leuven University Press, Leuven, 1991.

But in human history sometimes mainstream Church ideas have been tinged by those from marginal theologies and apocryphal sources. As revealed above, among others, Nicole Thierry has provided us with an example—most relevant to our discussion about the spiritual dimension of breastfeeding—of a church in which a strong connection between noncanonical theology and iconography has been expressed. This is the chapel of Anne and Joachim at *Kizıl Çukur*, which visually narrates Mary's birth. In the same place, the depiction of Christ's ancestors underlines the fact that he has a human nature in addition to the divine one.

As observed, other churches have been considered from the perspective of a relation theology-iconography: Omorphokklesia, Panagia Kanakaria Lythrankomi, S. Agata Church, St. Apollinaire Nuovo, and San Marco. Some of them are associated with the theological situation created by the emergence of the Bogomils which, as seen, led to specificities regarding the depiction of the breastfeeding act (it refocused, from portraying *Maria lactans* to Anne suckling her daughter).

The phenomena taking place in the theological landscape of Southern Europe in the Middle Ages compelled the representatives of mainstream Christianity to ask themselves: Could the experience of feeding on milk be conceived as being more than a physiological act? And, more specifically, what could it mean in hagiography? What could be known through the consumption of this nutritious liquid? How can its visual representation be employed in theological discussions? This book has attempted to respond to some of these questions by arguing that most of the ancient and medieval Christians used such "milk encounters" to express the idea that the human/divine realities that converge in the physical form of a saint are apt to concede glimpses into the supernal world. Deploying a wide array of Byzantine and medieval sources, it has examined the early Christian understanding of lactation through literary and visual imagery, liturgical practices, homiletic and hymnographic conventions, theological discourse, mystagogical commentaries, medical information, eschatological pointers, religious rituals, and ascetic disciplines. Strong indications have been given about how written texts and painted or sculpted works informed each other during the Byzantine and Medieval periods, especially through the correlations between patristic literature, homilies, apocrypha, and images—all of these having *Anna Galaktotrophousa* as a common theme.

Anne nursing Mary images began to appear from the mid-Byzantine era onwards. The Byzantines are considered by many to have been conservative and are known for reproducing the same iconographies for over

1100 years (Even now, the post-Byzantine images bring to mind the realities of the empire that once existed around the Mediterranean). Some have interpreted this reality as indicating a lack of creativity. I have challenged such an opinion in one of my previous books[4] and also in some articles, on the grounds that a very theological informed visual set of iconographic rules did (and still does) allow for innovation. This characteristic accounted for the execution of frescoes and mosaics containing Anne breastfeeding images. In the context of our discussion here, minute changes and the creation of new iconographic types within the traditional Byzantine framework as variations of more established ones (hence perhaps one should call them iconographical subtypes) could also mean that patrons and executers sometimes interpreted the conventions of liturgical art differently among themselves but—and this is the most important for the case in point here—they collaborated in conveying religious beliefs through iconography when the reality required so. The *Galaktotrophousa* and, more generally, the *Eleousa* iconographical type is usually employed in depictions of the Virgin.[5] Their introduction in the rendering of St. Anne reflects the same change in the Byzantines's attitude towards this saint as that noticed in homiletics and hymnography. When, with the Paleologan dynasty, the expression of emotions peculiar to *Eleousa*, such as the touching of cheeks and the embrace, was allowed in iconography, it was not confined to renderings of Mary but, as stated, it was also gradually extended to her mother and to Elizabeth. When the necessity arose to counter the Bogomil and generally Manichean concepts, the next step—the depiction of a saint breastfeeding as a prototype of human gestures pointing towards Divinity—followed naturally. The Bogomils's arrival on the scene of history was the trigger that initiated the depiction of the breastfeeding act involving St. Anne since the saint was very popular in the area of their occurrence and expansion. Once the point was made, after the number of Bogomils diminished to almost total extinction, the process of illustrating the nursing episode came to an end. We think that much of the above constitutes strong evidence that this intimate bodily representation was a reaction to the Bogomil ideas that was "prepared" by anterior

[4] E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Icons and Iconographers in Romania*, Foreword Andrew Louth, Saarbrűcken: VDM Verlag, 2009.

[5] These are also presented in literature, icons, frescoes, and even on coins, as John Cotsonis shows in his article "The image of the Virgin Nursing (*Galaktotrophousa*) and a Unique Inscription on the Seals of Romanos Romanos, Metropolitan of Kyzikos", *DOP*, vol. 65–66 (2011–2012), pp. 193–207.

developments in both theology and iconography. Our publication has also argued for a richer appreciation of Byzantine and medieval notions of embodiment; this will be conducive to a greater contemporary awareness of how the body and its needs might be brought into play in theology.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

E. Ene D-Vasilescu, *Heavenly Sustenance in Patristic Texts and Byzantine Iconography*, New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98986-0